THE RETVRNES OF Spiritual *comfort* and *grief* IN A DEVOUT SOUL.

Repreſented (by entercourſe of *Letters*) to the Right Honourable, the Lady *LETICE*, Vi-Counteſs *Falkland*, in her Life time.

AND

Exemplified in the holy *Life* and *Death* of the ſaid Honorable Lady.

Publiſhed for the benefit and eaſe of all who labour under ſpiritual affliction.

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Ætatis
Suæ 35
THE LADY LETTICE
VI=COUNTESSE FALKLAND
M. Calvert
NOW
M. Taylor
ECCE
OMNIA
In Domino quies

38
1. 12.
62.

TO
The pious Reader.

Chriſtian Reader,

THeſe Letters, *with their* Anſwers, *are a* repreſentation *of the* comforts *and* ſorrows *of a* devout ſoul. *And in them the Writer takes the liberty of a* Repreſentor, *not only to diſguiſe the Perſon to whom he writes, but alſo to heighten here and there, the matter of which he writes: That one and the ſame ſoul ſhould be to day on the top of* mount Tabor, (*in* exceſs *of* comfort) *and to morrow on the top of* mount Calvary (*in the* bitterneſs *of* ſorrow) *though it be ſomwhat extraordinary, yet ſuch there have bin, and are. But happily you are one of them, who walk in the* plain, low way; *unacquainted*

with heights *and* depths: *And though ſo, in this* repreſentation *you may ſee, the various diſpenſations of God, and from it you may learn (how ever God hath bin pleaſed to deal with you heretofore, or however he ſhal be pleaſed to deal with you hereafter) to be fervent in ſpirit, and to be Zealous unto the end.*

The other Annexed Letter *is a Relation of ſome ſpiritual comf rts and ſorrows, and of many excellent virtues in the* Life *of the late Vi-Counteſs* Falkland; *which particulars were gathered up, and put together, at the requeſt of ſome of* her *dear friends, who have promiſed (as it is hoped you alſo wil) to be followers of* her, *as ſhe was of Chriſt, and then to ſtrive to excel in every grace and virtue: for which you have the conſtant praiers of him, who is*

Your ſervant in

Chriſt Jeſus.

To the Memory of the moſt religious and virtuous Lady, the Lady *Letice*, Vi-Counteſſe *Falkland*.

Her Compariſon with ancient Saints.

Show me your *Legends*, you, in whoſe bright year
More *Saints* & *Martyrs* then *black Days* appear:
Martyrs & Saints, whoſe conſecrated Names
Stand ſhining there, as in their ſecond Flames.
'Mong'ſt all your *Tecla's*, *Bridget's*, *Friſwid's*, all
Your fiction-Saints, or which we true Saints call,
You will not find one He, or She more fit
To be extoll'd, or canoniz'd in Wit,
Then *this departed Lady*, who embalms
All Poetry, and turns all Verſe to Pſalms.

Come then my holieſt Fire, lend me a Heat
As pure as that which did in *David* beat,
When to's inſpir'd Harp, and ſacred String,
He did the Deeds of ancient Hero's ſing.
In whoſe high Numbers, and religious ſtrain,
Moſes yet lives, and *Miriam* breathes again.
And who, (*A Poet after Gods own heart, As wel as Man*) ſuch Vertue did impart
To his own ſtory, that he thence is ſtil
A Scripture-Saint, made ſo by his own quil.
Had He this Lady, or her Actions ſeen;
She had a part of his rare Pſalter been.
And had ſtood there recorded by his pen,
The holieſt Woman next to holy men.

Her Childhood.

WHose Infancy (The time when He begins
To tempt us with the first Assault of Sins,
Who in a borrowed shape doth stil invade
Our Age, like *Eve*, assoon as we are made)
Was so quick-sighted, so wel taught, that she
Through his false paint did then the Serpent see;
Then in her Cradle strangled him, whose suits
Came dreft ith' Beauty of forbidden Fruits.

Her Youth.

HEr Youth was like her Infancy, from whence
Began her second State of Innocence.
An Age as harmless as if stil new-born;
A Time of Day as spotless as her Morn;
A Stage of Life, in which appear'd all seeds
Of after Vertue, yet unmix't with weeds.
Here did begin her Studies, which then told
How young she was in years, in Grace how old.
Whose other Scriptures were Gods creatures, where
She heard him spake t' her Ey, as that t' her Ear.
And, like the *Hebrew Shepheard*, in each blush
Of Flowers, beheld him flaming in a Bush (found
Once more unburnt, thence thought she heard a
Which told her, God thus seen, made holy ground.
She did not spend her Days, like some, who do
With their youths dressings learn youths vices too.
Nor was she school'd in th'art to weave her Hair
Into loose Braids, and made it thence grow, Snare.
Or how to frame her smiles, or order looks,
Or make her gestures passe for wel-laid hooks;
Such false court engines she bequeath' d to those,
Whose virtue is their face, and good parts clothes.

Her Marriage.

HEr riper years did call her to the bed,
Of one who did Her, not her dowry, wed.

No

No ſhaft with gold tipt, no dart ſhot from eys;
No fires were here ſeen which from fancy riſe.
Between theſe curtains, and this nuptial ſheet,
Male virtue did with female virtue meet.
A ſoul with ſoul, & mind here match't with mind,
The marriage torch held by a God not blind.
A Husband he, and ſhe a Wife, whoſe wil
After four child-births was a Virgin ſtil.

Her Huſbands Death.

HEre, *Noble Lord*, could I beſtow one Thee
Such learned Verſe as thou did'ſt once on me,
I on thy Herſe ſhould ſtick poetick Bayes,
And raiſe thee Statues, made, and built of praiſe.
Who wert thy *Nations glory, Englands pen*;
The beſt of writing, and of fighting men.
In whom the Camp, and Muſes claim'd a part;
A *S*chollars head, joyn'd to a *S*ouldiers heart.
By whoſe ſword ſomtimes, but by thy rare quil,
We alwaies conquer'd, and here vanquiſht ſtil.
But ſince thou leftſt us, to write wel hath bin
By our new times held a republik ſin.
All wit, like thine, now undergoes thy fate;
Firſt call'd *Malignant*, and a *Foe to th' State*,
Then murther'd by the dul, mechanick, rude,
Half beaſt, half man, *Fox-Tinker* multitude.
Say, O ye *Coblers, Weavers, Tinkers*, you
Whoſe ſecond trade is war, and Preaching; who
New prentices oth' field, (O ſervile rout!)
Have there againſt your Prince your time ſerv'd
What expiation, what requital can (out;
A legion of you make for this one man,
Were a whole legion ſlain, or felt the doom
Of her who periſht on *Achilles* tomb?
You boaſt of teaching Lords, and Ladies, who,
(Wives to thoſe Lords) uſe to expound, like you;

When you have prais'd them with your holieſt
And joyn'd your paint to their hypocriſies; (lies,
Amongſt them all you wil not find one life
Like to this Lords; or 'mongſt them all a wife
Like to this Lady; whoſe true zeal, and heat
T'wards God was more then they can counterfeit.

Her Widdowhood.

WHo now a Widdow, and her *dear Lord* ſlin;
Liv'd Saint *Paul's Matron*; that's a maid again.
A *Scripture Veſtal*, one whoſe chaſt deſire
Call'd it adultery not to watch one fire.
A Goſpel Lucrece to all ſecond loves,
One made of ice t'ward *Venus*, and her doves.
In whom all looſe thoughts did ſo coldly grow,
That they who courted her, made love to ſnow.

Her devotion and zeal.

YEt in this coldneſs, and obdurate froſt,
Stil burn'd a holy fire conceal'd, not loſt.
A fire, whoſe pure flames ſtil flew up, like thoſe
Which in wing'd Pyramids from Altars roſe;
A fire, which in moſt others kindles vice;
But here made morn, and evening ſacrifice.

O had you heard her fervent praiers, (the key
With which ſhe open'd, and lock't up the day)
Had you ere in her week-day Temple been,
Her conſecrated cloſet; and there ſeen
This Lady on her knees, whilſt with her eys
She climb'd the ſtars, and did invade the skies;
Had you there mark't what clouds of ſighs, what
Of tears ſhe rained at pœnitential howrs; (ſhowrs
How humble in her looks, and yet how ſtout,
How earneſt, wreſtling, and yet ſtil devout,
You'd write of her like me, and ſay that hence
Heaven did once more ſuffer violence.

Her

Her tenderneſs of Conſcience.

COme now ye twilight ſaints, religious bats,
Who ſwallow camels, and yet ſtrain at gnats;
You, whoſe wild ſcruples heightned into rage,
Are now the zeal, and madneſs of our age,
Show me one Lady like to this; who ſtil
Was ſo preciſe, ſo fearful to do ill, (plac'd
That her indifferent thoughts, words, dreams were
'Mongſt things to be repented; nay, at laſt,
She queſtion'd *her good Deeds*, and did begin
To call imperfect virtue venial ſin.

Her Charity.

YEt look upon her *Alms*, or ask the poor,
(Who ſtil put off their hunger at her door
Together with their rags) how often they
Who came there naked, went wel-cloath'd away:
Ask them how oft the hedge, and high-way gueſt,
Transform'd her table to the Scripture feaſt,
Where the invited were all lame, or blind,
Beggars half-famiſht, who til then ne'r din'd;
They'l ſay, ſhe did *Chriſt* in his *members* ſee,
And all that wanted her relief, were He.

Nor did ſhe, like our *Phariſees*, diſpence
Her gifts before men, to win praiſe from thence.
Her charity was ſecret, no alms known,
The poor reliev'd, without a trumpet blown.
No corner of a ſtreet, no bounty cleft,
Her right hand ſtil was ſtranger to the left.
Her doles, indeed, were Scripture wonders, we
Once more *ſaw Loaves, and Fiſhes multiply*
Between the givers hands; from whence they grew
Full baskets, and fed thouſands; how, none knew.

Her

ANd now, though I cannot report her death
In words as holy as her dying breath,
With which expir'd her ſoul, as free from ſin
And ſpotleſs almoſt, as when 't firſt came in
To her frail body; yet as oft as I
Do read of Saints advanc'd above the ſky,
Sitting on amber clouds, and cloath'd in white,
Methinks a glittering *Angel* bids me write
My revelation too, *where Thrones appear,*
And ſhe in thoſe white Robes ſhe put on here.

An Elegie,

Written to ſome Ladies of theſe Times.

YOu, who thought *Chaplains* only *things of State,*
And count Them (*Coachmen Preaching*) out of date. (love
Learn here their *holier uſe*; and if you
Your Souls as well as Bodies; and would prove
Your *Plea* and *Evidence* to Heaven, and
Make your *Election ſure*, as Goods, or Land;
Having all Conſcience-ſcruples ſet as cleare
As your Law-doubts, or Blood-diſtempers are:
Iudge, if *Divines* be of Leſſe Value, than
Your coſtly *Lawyer*, or *Phyſitian*.
And think not that ſix Words or Lines of theirs
More precious be, then *Sermons* are and *Prayers*.

Had You beene're ſo well as to be ſick
Of ſpirituall diſeaſes, and were quick
With the ſouls iſſue, Virtue, till you grew
Big with devotion, and were *Born anew*:
You then would hold the *Caſuiſts* as *Dear*,
As in your other *Labours*, Midwives are.
Then you'd prefer theſe *Cordiall Letters*, 'bove
All flattring-love-Epiſtles, which doe prove,
When read by th' ſober and judicious eie,
But handſome lies, and pretty blaſphemie.

And

And are to theſe no more *Canonicall*
Then if with *Balzac* you compare *Saint Paul.*

Would our *New-Teachers* make this Book their (ſchole
Here they might learn to *ſet* a *broken ſoul*,
And ſcatter ſacred calms into a breſt,
Though 't were with all late niceties *poſſeſt*.
While others lightning caſt in ſtead of light,
And curry both in *looks*, and *ſaymgs*, night;
Giving *ſolutions* difficult as the *Caſe*;
(Like thoſe that draw Pictures with half a face)
Our *Oracle* here gives Anſwers full and clear,
As Face to Face doth in the Glaſſe appear.

Nor doth he *ſtorm*, but meekly checks a ſin
In that ſweet ſtile, that ſtile the Goſpel's in.
Which makes his *Threatnings* amiably calm,
And his *Launce* gentle as anothers *Balm*;
Curing a *wounded ſpirit* without loſſe,
While he refines the mettall, burns the droſſe.

Hence, to ſouls ſunk in tears, his counſels prove
Welcome, as *Noahs comforter*, the *Dove*.
Welcome, as *Peace* would be to all that are,
Not ſtain, but worſe, ſlav'd by a ſev'n *years* war.

See how *day* breaks! how *joy* and *ſadneſs* greet!
Thus have I ſeen *Sun beams* and *ſhowers* meet,
Leaving ith' skie the *gaudy Bowe*, to let
Vs know, we were not to be *drown'd*, but *wet*.
And if our Faith be ſtrong, we *may* ev'n here
See as true ſigns of ſafetie, as is there.

O happie Chriſtians! happie in each Croſſe!
Do but compare theſe comforts with *your* loſſe,
And *you'l* no more complain, then he that is
Rain'd to *Heaven*, *tortur'd* into *Bliſſe*.

But

But among all the *Cordials*, there is none
Sufficient to redreſſe and ſtill the moane
Made at *his Ladies death*: 't is that alone
Scandals Divines, as Agues long have done
The beſt Phyſitians; nothing can revive
Our buri'd Souls, but bringing her alive.
And that our *holy Chymiſt* doth Eſſay
In his *laſt Letter*, where the *Mother* may
See her *own Daughter* riſen from the Dead;
So Riſen, as ne're more to be Buried.

And now, though *Paul* forbids her Sex to *Preach*,
Yet may her *Life inſtruct*, and her *Death teach*,
For *good Works* ne're were ſilenc'd. If we then
Should ſee a Maſſacre of Holy men,
With whom all Truths and Duties too ſhould fall,
Yet in *Her practiſe* we might find them all.
Her *Deeds* were more then boldeſt Nuns do *vow*;
The *Legends* will turn a true *Hiſt'ry* now;
While all *religious wonders* they aver,
Are not done only, but outdone by Her.
Each morne the *Law and Goſpel* were her *glaſſe*,
And *Fearlyes Handmayd* her *Attendant* was.
Nor did ſhe late or early draw in Ayre,
But ſhe return'd it back in *Praiſe*, or *Prayer*.

'Tis true, Sh'had many ſcruples; But they're ſuch
As neither *Gods*, nor *Kings* Prerogative touch.
'Mongſt all her holy Doubtings, you'l find none
Startling at *Gods Decrees*, or *Three in One*.
Such Myſteries her Faith had conquer'd; *She*
Had only of *Her ſelf a jealouſie*.
While *She* a *Judge* o others Acts was known,
She's a ſeverer Tyrant of her own.
Suſpicious of her beſt performance, ſtill
She fear'd ſhe err'd; *Leſſe Good was with her Ill*.

And

And though full fraught with *Maries graces*, yet
She would her self *Magdalens penance* set:
And wash those Tears with Tears; thus oftentimes
More sorrowing for her *Prayers*, then *we* for *crimes*.
Blesse me! how crosse to hers hath our course bin!
She *mourn'd for Innocence*, we joy in sin.
Though these worst times *Uncharitable* be
Even to *Charity* it self, yet she
As Costly was in *Alms* and *Piety*,
As *City Madams* are in *Luxury*.
And made more *Visits* to the *Poor*, then those
Do to the *Rich*, when they've *new Coach & Cloaths*.

Thus *Good*, thus *Pious*, she's the *happy Spouse*
Of Him, who *knew* best how to *judge* and *chuse*,
Falkland the Learn'd, whose *meanest parts* were *great*
Enough to make *All other Lords Compleat*.
Nor did He wed her to *joyn Fortunes*, and
Lay *Bags* to *Bags*, and couple *Lands to Land*;
Such *Exchange Ware* he scorn'd, whose Nobler eye
Saw in her *Virtues*, *Rich Conveniency*.
Her Soul lay well for His; and made as fit
A Match, as when *Discretion* meets with *Wit*.
His *Knowledge* rectifi'd Her *Zeale*, and then
Her *Faith* His *Reason* qualify'd again.
Thus Two Elixirs mingled safely pass,
Whereas each single often breaks the Glass.

Upon

Upon the pious Papers of the Right Honourable, the Lady LETICE, *Vi-Counteſſe* Falkland.

THis Orphan iſſuing from ſo ſweet a Mother
Is left ſo rich, that it will beg no other
Almes of the Reader, then to read it over.
It asks no partiall praiſes, its own worth,
Sets it ſelf (more then we can ſet it) forth,
It need not boaſt its noble pedigree,
'Tis plain, that none could bring it forth but ſhe.
Pardon ingenious duſt (when we'd expreſſe
Thy worth) if weak expreſſions make it leſſe,
We doe not wiſh the world ſhould gueſſe thy wit
By what we ſay, but what thy ſelf laſt writ.
Let thoſe (that would acquainted be with you)
Survey the picture, that your own hand drew.

A brief of the ſeverals in this TREATISE.

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The Firſt Letter.

Upon the Souls conſtancy and frequency in holy Duties, her comforts in them are repreſented.

Sir,

I Should be not onely unthankfull, but uncivil, if I give you not account of my ſtate and condition, ſince our laſt abode together.

With humble thanks to God, for his grace and goodnes, towards me, premiſed, thus it is. Your Spiritual directions I

have obſerved, as punctually as I could: I am preſent at all publike Aſſemblies, in the houſe of God, and bear my part conſtantly in that ſolemn worſhip of his Name. And to theſe publike devotions, I adde private Prayers with my family, Morning and Evening, and to them, Secret, in my Cloſet, and theſe duties I perform conſtantly; for I remember you told me, that that ſtrict precept of the Apoſtle, *Pray continually*, hath not ordinarily a more qualified ſenſe then this, Obſerve your ſet-times of Prayer, conſtantly, without intermiſſion.

Neither am I leſſe conſtant at Sermons, and Catechiſings, and at the holy Sacrament of our moſt bleſſed Lords body and blood; though I cannot be ſo frequent at theſe duties; Thoſe I can hear but once a week, this I can receive, but once a moneth. And on daies of Humiliation, I labour to intermix more earneſt, as wel as more frequent Prayers, for the publik neceſſities, and for mine own private wants; endeavouring to obſerve the ordinary, and extraordinary Faſts of the Church, as ſtrictly as my weak body, and my weaker fleſh will give me leave.

And that which I relate all this for, which

which I dare not divulge to others, nor conceale from you, is this: my exceeding great *delight* in theſe ſpiritual exerciſes; while I hear, or read, I taſte much *ſweetneſſe* in the promiſes of the Goſpel; and while I pray, or meditate, I receive much *Comfort* and delight; my ſoul is filled as it were with *marrow and fatneſſe*, and my heart is almoſt raviſhed with *ſpiritual joy*.

Now and then I compare the former pleaſures and delights, I had in worldly things, at Court, with theſe I now enjoy, and I account them all as droſſe and dung in compariſon of theſe; And if it were Capital in the Judicial Law for any one to have a perfume in his houſe like to that of the Tabernacle, *Exod.* 30. *ult.* ſurely he is not guiltles who fancies any true ſweetneſſe, or delight, any where, but in the Tabernacle: no perfume can be made, nor ought to be thought ſo ſweet, ſo fragrant, ſo excellent as this; no delights, or comforts in our own houſes, or in Kings Courts either, comparable to theſe of the *Tabernacle*, and *Temple* of God.

Now I miſſe thoſe opportunities I had at Court, and at the Cathedral Church;

either of thoſe places afforded publik Prayers thrice every day, and Lectures alſo on the week days; Nay it is not here ſo well with me as it was when you and I lived together in that Country village, where the good Parſon had *Morning and Evening Prayer* in the Pariſh Church, *twice* a day continually; where I now live we have this advantage of publik Prayer, onely on the Lords day, and its Eve, and on Holy-days, & their Eve's, and on Wedneſdays and Fridays, our wonted Letany days; now I find not that other *Analogy* between our Prayers, and that Incenſe and perfumes of the Tabernacle, that as *theſe*, ſo *thoſe* were offered up daily: However the *ſweetneſſe* of them is it I ſpeak of, which I have moſt plentifully from them.

And now upon the *ſenſe* and *feeling* of theſe *joys* and *comforts* in the ſervice of God, I am confirmed in hope that neither Life, nor Death, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, ſhall be able to ſeparate me from the *Love of God*, and of his ſervice, and worſhip; but as I have begun, ſo I ſhall (by Gods grace) perſevere in it, to my lives end; for which I pray daily,

daily, and doe alſo deſire your prayers, for him, who is,

Yours in the Lord.

The Anſwer.

Sheweth the ſpecial favor of God, affording at the firſt beginning of a Devout life, both ſenſible and ſpiritual Conſolations.

Sir,

YOurs I received, and rejoyce with you, for the *Comforts*, and *joys* you find in the *ſervice* of God, and for your diligence in holy duties, and exerciſes of Devotion: you now taſte, and ſee the goodneſſe of the Lord, that in keeping of his Commandements, there is exceeding *delight* and *joy*; *Pſal.* 19. not onely *comfort* layd up for it hereafter, but alſo *comfort* in it here; even ſuch as ey hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entred into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared, even in this world, (for of ſuch the Apoſtle ſpeaks in that place) for ſuch as love him; 1 *Cor.* 2. 9. ſo that vertue and piety is an excellent great reward to it ſelfe: And yet that

which is, before us hereafter, is infinitely beyond this; for if there be ſuch *pleaſures* in the kingdome of *Grace*, how unſpeakably tranſcendent are thoſe laid up for us in the kingdome of *Glory*?

Notwithſtanding there is ſomewhat ſpecial in the goodneſſe, and wiſdom of God, affording ſuch *comforts* and *delights* unto you at this your firſt ſetting forth in this ſpiritual race. And it is this.

That you may perceive and that preſently, what *advantage* you have gained by the change of your life; and that thereupon you may ſtrengthen your reſolution more and more of continuing in this pious courſe, of running to the end of the race, that you may obtain that prize of endleſſe joy and comfort: For you confeſſe your ſelf a great gainer already, having in poſſeſſion *Gold* in ſtead of *Braſſe*, *Silver* for *Lead*, *Spiritual* delights and pleaſures for *worldly* and *Carnal*; Inſtead of huſks (fit onely for ſwine) in a *ſtrange* Country, you have *goodly proviſion* (a fatted Calf) and this attended with mirth and muſick, in your *fathers* houſe.

Oh, let not an ey roul, nor a thought ſtray back again towards that ſtrange country of Egypt, toward the onions, and

fleſh-

fleſh-pots there; now you are ſo fully ſatisfied, and delighted, with this Manna from heaven! And if at any time you ſhould not taſte the true ſweetneſſe of this, yet let not the falſe pleaſures of the other, be once thought on by you; This I intreat not without ſome vehemency, and earneſtneſſe: For I muſt tell you, that

All ſuch comfort and delight (as you ſeeme to ſpeak of) is not ſpiritual, nor laſting; In theſe holy exerciſes (of faſting, praying, meditating, hearing Sermons, and receiving the bleſsed Sacrament, and ſuch like) there is an outward and ſenſible comfort, as well as an inward, and ſpiritual comfort; and thoſe ſenſible conſolations (as they are called) not ſo laſting, and permanent, as theſe inward comforts are: conſider this, I pray, and examine whether your comforts be inward, and ſpiritual, or outward and ſenſible comforts onely, or whether you abound with both: In the mean while I ſhall remember you with *Davids* Praier (for a people exalted with joy and comfort in Gods ſervice) that the Lord God would keep this joy for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of your heart, 1 *Chr.* 29. 18. and ſtabliſh your heart thereby, unto himſelfe.

Thus desiring your praiers for me, I commend you to Gods protection, and rest

Your servant in our Lord and Master Christ Jesus.

The Second Letter.

The increase of consolations in a pious soul.

Sir,

THe Lord heareth your praiers for me and answereth them gratiously; for my delights and joys in the performance of all holy duties encrease more and more: At the receiving of the blessed Sacrament my heart is still more enlarged, and more elevated with heavenly comforts; and at solemn humiliations my voyce sometimes failes me, by reason of my groans and sighs: I seldom rise from my knees, (on those days) but I see the floore watred with my Tears; And even these tears are full of comfort and pleasantness.

I was wont to object against this course of strict life; that it was full of heavines and dulness; no *comforts* at all in it: but now I perceive, as S. *Augustine* saith in the

the like caſe, *Vos habuiſtis* Deum, *& gaviſi eſtis gaudio magno, etſi ego non habui Oculus*; Ye had your *comforts*, and *rejoyceings*, though I had not eyes to *diſcerne* them: now I bleſs God that mine eys are open, and I taſte and ſee how gracious the Lord is, and that he beſtows wonderfull *comforts* on them, who ſerve him.

And therefore I bleſs God who openeth his hand wide, and powreth out plentifully his *comforts* upon me: And ſo much the more muſt I praiſe him for this goodneſs of his, towards me, becauſe (as you informe in your letter) theſe *comforts* are not common to all *ranks* of holy Chriſtians, but to *beginners* chiefly; yea, and many there are (it ſeemes) who both begin, and continue on without them: And this ſpecial goodneſs and mercy of God beſtowing ſuch *comforts*, and *mercies* on *me* which he denies to *many* of His ſervants, who are more forward in holineſs then I, requires my ſpiritual prayſe and thanks to Him.

But that *clauſe* in your letter of *ſpiritual and ſenſible conſolations*, I do not clearly apprehend; how (I pray) can there be *ſenſible* conſolations in *Inward* and ſpiritual Things? Mine acquaintance with theſe

conſolations is ſo young, that I cannot well diſtinguiſh between the one, and the other. Neither can I think I want *either* of them, and ſhall ſtill hope, that they will be *both* conſtant with me: But if you pleaſe to inſtruct me, more fully in theſe *ſpiritual* and thoſe *ſenſible Conſolations*, plowing with your owne heifer, I ſhall reſolve my ſelf, and anſwer you. And ſo I commend you to God and reſt

Yours in the Lord.

The Anſwer.

How to diſcern between ſpiritual and ſenſible Conſolations.

Sir,

I am moſt ready to ſatifie your deſire, and ſhall explain my meaning more fully, before I propound my queſtion.

There is in the ſoule of man, an *upper* Region, and a *lower* Region; I mean a *Rational*, and a *ſenſitive* Part. The upper and rational part of the ſoul conſiſts of the underſtanding and the will, the reaſonable Faculties.

The lower, or ſenſitive part of the ſoul, con-

conſiſts of the imagination, and memory, &c. the ſenſitive faculties of the ſoul, or the inward ſenſes; And though the ſoul of man be immaterial and ſpiritual, and wholly rational, yet thoſe operations of Hers, which are immediately by thoſe inward (as well as thoſe by our outward) ſenſes, are, properly enough, called the operations, or Acts of the *ſenſitive* ſoule.

And anſwerable to theſe two parts of the ſoul, there are *Spiritual*, and there are *ſenſible Conſolations*: They which are in the upper and rational part of the ſoul (the underſtanding, and the will) are moſt properly called ſpiritual; And they which are in the lower, and ſenſitive part of the ſoul (the phantaſie or imagination) though they be concerning ſpiritual things, are properly enough called *ſenſible Conſolations*.

And theſe ſeveral Conſolations are intimated to us, by that of the *Pſalmiſt*; My heart, and my fleſh delight in the Lord. *Pſal.* 84. 2. And the loſs of both theſe in that other place where the *Pſalmiſt* complaines, My heart, and my fleſh faileth. *Pſal.* 73. 26.

Now when our underſtanding and our will are filled with theſe ſpiritual comforts,

forts, in the exerciſe of Holy duties, there is little doubt, but that they are raiſed and alſo cheriſhed by the Holy Spirit of God, working upon the ſoul; Either *immediately*, the bleſſed Spirit caſting his Beames of comfort *directly* upon thoſe reaſonable faculties of the ſoul: Or *mediately*, The Spirit ſhining firſt and directly upon the outward ſenſes, or upon the inward, the phantaſie, and imagination, and from thence reflecting ſome luſtre upon the higher faculties, the will and underſtanding.

And ſo theſe outward ſenſible conſolations, are ſometimes wrought in us, by the bleſſed Spirit, immediately and directly working upon the imagination; and that in ſo great a meaſure that ſhe can conveigh a good part of her comforts up to the reaſonable faculties: Yet otherwhile theſe ſenſible Conſolations, in the imagination, (and ſo more outwardly) are onely mediately from the bleſſed Spirit, who adminiſters oftentimes ſuch plenty of Comfort to the will and underſtanding, that thence it deſcends down unto theſe neighbouring parts and faculties: Thus one while the miſtreſs (Reaſon) is ſo full of joy, that ſhe calls her ſervants, and neighbours,

bours, (the imagination & outward man) to rejoyce with her; and otherwhile the ſervant is ſo full, that her miſtreſs partakes with Her; and ſo the whole houſe (upper and lower Region) is filled with joy.

And yet, a time there is (of joy too) when it is not ſo plentiful; The miſtreſs rejoycing, and the ſervants no way partaking of it; Or the ſervants rejoycing, and the miſtreſs having no ſhare in it: joy there may be in the upper, not in the lower; or in the lower, not in the upper Region: When it is, as the woman's leaven, (a little, in a great lump) neither of them can diffuſe their joy, and communicate it to the other.

And upon this ground it is, that I move my *queſtion*, ſeeing there may be joy and comfort in the *inward* man, the will and the underſtanding, and none in the *outward*; and on the contrary, there may be joy in the *outward* man (the imagination or ſo) and none at all, *above*; It will be very material to reſolve your ſelf at leaſt, of which ſort your *comforts* are.

Eſpecially conſidering that thoſe joys above in the wil & underſtanding, are more joyous, and delightful far, then thoſe in the imagination or lower: And as more de-

delightful, ſo alſo, more certaine and conſtant, will abide longer with you, then the other; ſpiritual, then ſenſible conſolations.

Now, though you tell me, you have Both, that you want nothing that is called comfort, yet your ſenſible conſolations, ſeem to me, to be moſt predominant in you; and that which inclines me thus to think is your expreſſions concerning ſighs, and tears, and the like, which are in the ſenſitive, and lower part of the ſoul.

And theſe *Outward ſenſible conſolations* are of two ſorts, (as you imply.) Either ſuch as are comfortable, and joyous in themſelves, when the mouth is filled as it were with laughter, the face anointed with oyle, and the whole outward man *danceth* with chearfulneſs:

Or els, ſuch as are uncomfortable in themſelves, but do inſtantly bring forth the fruit of comfort and joy; as ſighs, and groans, and tears: all which proceed from grief, and therefore are not *joyous* in themſelves, yet have joy and comfort preſently *reſulting* from them: Though not comfort *in* them, yet comfort comes *with* them, and therefore they alſo are called *Conſolations*.

And

And *Sir*, though you now *abound* with theſe ſenſible conſolations, yet be pleaſed to think of *ſcarcity* and *want*, and to prepare for that time. Though you have now a moſt pleaſant *ſerenity* in your ſoul, yet *clouds* may appear, I fear, and darken it; nay, I cannot promiſe, that you ſhall be ſecure from *ſtormes* and *tempeſts*: My prayer therefore for you ſhall be, that among the manifold changes of this life, you may never want thoſe *true* ſpiritual joyes of God, to whoſe grace I commend you, who am, in Him,

Your Servant.

The Third Letter.

Repreſenteth thoſe ſenſible Conſolations decreaſing, and the pious ſoul troubled thereat.

Sir,

YOur fore-warning was a *preſage* too, and it is already come to paſs; my *joy* is turned into *heavineſs*, and *comforts* into *greif*; Summer is paſt, and tempeſtuous winter is come upon me; the Light, the light of Gods countenance is withheld from me, and darkneſs, Egyptian darkneſs

darkneſs compaſſeth me round about, ſo that I go mourning all the day long.

Heretofore I took great *delight* in the ſervice and worſhip of God; my Prayers were refreſhments, yea, banquets to me; my Faſts and Humiliations, as corne and wine, did feaſt and chear my Heart; By reading, or hearing Gods word, or by meditating upon it, and by receiving the Bleſſed Sacrament, my ſoul became young and luſty as an Eagle, full of vigor, and comfort; But now dryneſs and ſadneſs have taken hold upon me; and ſorrow and grief overwhelm me.

In the exerciſe of Holy Duties, I am ſo little affected with comfort, and delight, that I grow now *backward* to them, and *dull* and *drowſy* in them, and thoſe times which are ſet apart for the Publik and ſolemn worſhip of God, ſeem now to me, (as the Sabbaths to them in *Amos*) moſt *tedious* and long.

Formerly my ſoul dwelt as in a fruitful, and pleaſant land, *always full* of the comforts of God, refreſhed *daily* with the dew of his heavenly Grace; But now it wanders as in a barren, and dry wilderneſs, where *no* water is; A wilderneſs, where I cannot find my God with his

wonted

wonted favour and joy; dry, and no water in it, not the leaſt dew from heaven to moiſten and refreſh it.

I was well aware that the delights of the *world* were *fading*, and tranſitory; but are theſe *Chriſtian* comforts, theſe *holy* joys *ſo* too? The fire and heat of Earthly Pleaſures, I have oft ſeen ſuddenly quenched; and can that from heaven, heavenly, be quenched too? Oh that I had wings like a Dove, that I might flee away to thoſe comforts, and Pleaſures, which never fail, where there is fulneſs of joy, and that for evermore!

With Holy *Job. cap.* 23. 8. I go forward, but my God is not there, and backward but I cannot perceive Him, On the left hand, and on the right hand, but He hideth himſelf from me: Then with the ſpouſe in the Canticles, I require of all that paſs by, which way my Beloved was gone, and whither he was turned aſide; And while I go ſorrowing up and down to ſeek him, whom my ſoul loveth, The Egyptians (my companions formerly in ſin) cry out againſt me, ſaying, For miſcheife was he led away from among us, that he might periſh in a wilderneſs; Yea, my Grand-enemy eſpies my wandering, and mocks

and

and ſcoffs at me. The Delights (ſaith he) which I formerly allowed you, *you* have *caſt off*, and your new Delights have *caſt off you*: where is now your God? your late *joy* and *comfort*!

And theſe taunts and checks (believe me *Sir*,) make my other affections moſt grievous: Put to your Hand, I beſeech you, and by your *ſpiritual* Directions eaſe me, what you can; In the mean time I ſhall not ceaſe to pray, Reſtore me O Lord, to thoſe *joys* again, and ſtabliſh me with thoſe heavenly *Comforts*, for which I deſire your frequent prayers alſo; for I am

Your ſad Friend.

The Anſwer.

Directeth ſome means how the Pious ſoul may regain theſe ſenſible conſolations; Or if not, reaſons alleged why ſhe ſhould ſatisfy herſelf without them.

Sir,

YOurs I received, and as I rejoiced before with you when you did rejoyce, ſo now I mourn with you who mourn; and to take off ſome part of the grief from you, and my ſelfe, I embrace the firſt oppor-

opportunity of writing that I might in the beginning of your malady apply ſomewhat for it:

You aggravate your *preſent grief* and ſadneſs, by reflecting much upon your *former Comforts*, and Delights, which is in effect to put thoſe Comforts into the wrong ſcale: they ſhould ſerve to counter-poize your preſent ſorrow, and dryneſs; not to weigh *with* them in *one*, and the *ſame* ſcale, but to weigh *againſt* them, in the *other*: and your Argument ſhould be as *Jobs*; I *have* received *good* things at the hand of God, and *ſhall* I not receive *evill?* I have had a very liberal portion of the ſweetneſs of the honey, for ſome years together, and ſhall I think much to taſt of a little wormwood and bitterneſs, for a few daies? If you put *that* in the *one* ſcale, *this* in the *other*, it will be ſome eaſe to you.

But for the particular *Malady* which you complain of, I can but gueſs what your Diſeaſe is; and if I gueſs amiſs, what I preſcribe I revoke before hand; onely if I find out your *Diſeaſe*, you may follow my directions for the *cure*, or the *eaſe* of it.

In this beginning of your *Diſquiet*, I ſhall preſume, That you want onely thoſe *ſenſible* Conſolations, not thoſe *ſpiritual*, thoſe

in

in the *lower* part of the ſoul, the ſenſitive faculties, not theſe in the *upper* faculties, of the will and underſtanding; and therefore your firſt task will be, to conſider, whether theſe ſenſible and outward conſolations faile you, by reaſon of ſome natural cauſe in your ſelf, your Body not ſo fitly diſpoſed now, to *receive* the *impreſſions* of joy, nor the imagination, to *form* them, as formerly: Or by ſome ſupernatural cauſe, God *withdrawing* theſe ſenſible conſolations from you.

However whether the cauſe be Natural, or Supernatural, the diſeaſe brings the ſoul to a great deal of perplexity and diſquiet, and afterwards into dangerous hazards, and therefore ſome directions I ſhall preſcribe.

Begin (it is beſt) with ſomewhat *inwardly*. Wheras you complain of your *heavineſs* in holy duties, prepare your ſelfe for them, more ſolemnly then ordinarily, with a moſt *ſerious* meditation of *God*, to whom, and in whoſe preſence, you are to perform thoſe duties; Make ſome impreſſion in your heart, of his moſt glorious Majeſty, and moſt dreadfull preſence; and quicken this your meditation by recounting his infinite goodneſs, and mercy;

and

and ſpecifie his mercies to your own ſoul; and this will diſpoſe you (I hope) to that *enlargement* of heart, and *tenderneſs*, which you complain you want; the *outward expreſſions* of *Love*.

If not, then to a *ſadder* meditation upon the *ſevere juſtice*, and righteouſneſs of God, reflecting all that while, upon your *own vileneſs*, and upon the bitterneſs of thoſe puniſhments which you have deſerved; the due conſideration of this, will conduce much to thoſe other *outward* expreſſions, of *grief and ſorrow*.

Repreſent God to your ſelf, as a moſt merciful *Father*, as a moſt ſevere *Judg*, and as a moſt glorious and powerful *King*, and ſurely either *Love*, or *Grief*, or *Fear* will bring forth ſome of your wonted *ſenſible Conſolations*.

And then preſent your ſupplications to that *glorious*, that *merciful*, that *juſt God*, and beſeech him for this *tenderneſs* of ſpirit.

And with theſe *inwards*, apply *outwardly*, Reverent proſtrations, humbly falling down, & kneeling before his dreadful Majeſty, ſmiting your breſt, with the Publican, and then lifting up your hands, and your eys unto heaven; and ſo to your other De-

Devotions; which though ſecret, with your ſelfe alone, yet if Vocal (in this caſe) you will be more likely to be affected outwardly at them: To which you may adde, ſinging of ſpiritual ſongs, both with voice, and inſtrument; 1 *Sam.* 16. 23. 2 *Kings* 3.16. you may read of greater matters, helped forward (to ſay the leaſt) with Muſick, and Inſtruments.

Theſe and ſome ſuch other means *outwardly* applied, (will I doubt not) reſtore you (by the mercy of God) to your former health and *comfort*: Neither inward nor outward means muſt be neglected; not *inward*, becauſe theſe *comforts* are the *gift* of God, and muſt be obtained by prayer: not theſe outward, becauſe the *Conſolations* which you labour to regain are *outward* and *ſenſible*, and therefore probably to be moved and ſtirred up in us, by our *outward* Actions, and deportment of body.

Other *means* to this purpoſe, you may read of in your Books, and ſome you may ſuggeſt to your ſelfe; for you beſt know your owne temper of body and ſoul, and therfore can prompt your ſelf, what may be fit to be done, eſpecially if you can recollect, *what thoughts* and imaginations were

were wont to raiſe them, in you, then you will uſe *thoſe* again, as a ready means to recover them.

But if notwithſtanding all theſe *means* uſed, you *continue* ſtill in this ſtate of *Drineſs*, and Barrenneſs, and are no ways able to regain your former conſolations, be not I pray ſo much *dejected* (as you ſeem) for want of them, for this is to diſquiet your ſelf in vain.

In *vain* (I ſay) becauſe you cannot add one cubit to your ſtature, your ſolicitouſneſs cannot help you; Nay, this diſquiet pulls you lower ſtill and lower; It is ſo far from *exalting* you towards comfort, that it *depreſſes* you with deeper ſadneſs and grief; It *thickens* the darkeneſs, not *diſpells* it.

But chiefly it is in *vain*, becauſe theſe ſenſible conſolations are not *tanti*; Good and profitable they are becauſe they make us cheerful and plentiful in the work of the Lord, but they are not ſo good, nor ſo abſolutely profitable, as that you ſhould be ſo ſorely diſmayed and dejected for the loſs and want of them. And this is a *chief* thing in this *ſubject* of conſolations, and moſt *ſeriouſly* to be conſidered.

Devotion doth not conſiſt in theſe outward

ward and ſenſible conſolations, but in a ready, active will and purpoſe to conform our ſelves inwardly and outwardly to the holy pleaſure, and commands of God, and as occaſion is given, executing the will of God, and obeying his Laws; this, this is pure devotion. The outward comforts (we ſpeak of) are brought forth by this, this is the *Mother*, they are but *Daughters*: and they are cheriſhed by this too, as the Daughter by the Mother; how ever ſometimes it comes to paſs, that as dutiful Daughters, they comfort and relieve the languiſhing Mother; Devotion, (the mother it ſelfe) is otherwhile ſupported by theſe conſolations.

Seeing then the main and chief part of Devotion may be in the ſoul of man, without the *ſenſible feeling*, and *outward* comfort of it, if we have the *Principal*, let us be therewith content; if this be preſent, though the other be abſent, it is not ſo deeply to be bewailed; There are (I perſwade my ſelf) many *Saints* (in a high degree of glory) in heaven, who never taſted here of theſe *outward Conſolations*.

It is a common errour to think that thoſe exerciſes of Gods worſhip, which we perform with *theſe outward* conſolations,

ons, are alway more acceptable to God, then *thoſe* which *affect* us not this way.

To us indeed they are moſt acceptable, becauſe of the delight which we have in ſuch ſoftneſs and tenderneſs of heart; but thoſe we perform, in the *drineſs* of our ſouls may be as acceptable to God, as theſe; for God who looks upon both inward and outward man, regards the *Heart*, and *ſpiritual* parts, more then the *Bodily*, and the *ſenſitive* parts.

Yea, oftentimes *theſe* are more acceptable to God, then *thoſe*; and the reaſon of it is this. Thoſe prayers and holy duties which we perform in our drineſs, (notwithſtanding we want the comfort of them) are preſumed to proceed from a more *vigorous* will; That heart is more fully ſet upon the diſcharge of theſe duties, which performes them *without* theſe *outward comforts*, then that which performes them onely, *with them*: Here is no ſtream of *Comfort* to carry you on in your duties, and if notwithſtanding you go on as faſt, and as firm, as if there were, your heart is full of vigour, and active reſolution, and therefore they are moſt acceptable to God; and argue a very great love of God, and of his ſervice.

Wherefore, if all means being uſed to *keep*, or to *recover* theſe ſenſible conſolations, you ſpeed not, be not dejected at it: But in that caſe, reſign your ſelf, and your deſires and delights wholly to God; if he pleaſes to afford them, uſe them, and improve your ſelf (as much as may be) by them; If God ſtil denies them, improve your ſelf without them; and though *outward* comforts decay, yet let the *inward* abound in you. Which you may moſt probably effect, if you continue reſolute, and conſtant in all *holy exerciſes* of Religion, & perform them all as duely, as heretofore, though now you have no ſweetneſs, nor pleaſant taſt in them. For which I commend you to the mercy, and grace of God, in whom I am

Your ſervant.

The fourth Letter.

Repreſenteth the pious ſoul wholly deprived of ſenſible conſolations; and ſpiritual conſolations decreaſing in her.

Sir,

I Apply my ſelf to no other Ghoſtly director, and thereupon your trouble returns

turns ſo quick; I thank you for your laſt letters, whereby I perceive that you have found out my *diſeaſe*, and therefore I was moſt diligent in obſerving your preſcriptions; the bittereſt pill is that in your laſt line, that I ſhould be as conſtant, and as ful, in my devotions and exerciſes of holy duties in this my *drineſs*, and barrenneſs, as ever I was heretofore amidſt my greateſt *comforts*, and conſolations. This ſeems a very hard duty, and (to return your own expreſſion) as difficult, as to ſail *without* a ſtream, (yea and without *winde* too) as faſt as *with* it: I have no *ſtream* of comfort at all in my devotions, to ſet me forward, and a ſpirit leſs calm (or rather a heavie load) of dulneſs and drowſineſs, to retard me, and yet I muſt make as quick a diſpatch, as when I had no ſuch impediment againſt me, and a full ſtream for me: Yet for theſe late weeks, I have ſet my ſelf ſtrictly to obſerve that, and your other directions; But, alas, *Sir*, the more I ſtruggle with my diſeaſe, the more it encreaſeth upon me; My God ſheweth me not the light of his countenance, but hideth his face more and more from me.

I was driven from the land of Canaan,

where I had an affluence of milk and hony, a full and conſtant poſſeſſion of *heavenly comforts*, yet for a while I was ſuffered to abide, as on the Mountain of *Piſgah*, where though I had not that *meaſure*, nor that *conſtantneſs* of comforts, as before, yet a *glimpſe* now and then of that *Canaan* was afforded to me; But now it is far worſe with me, I ſeem confined to a low *valley*, whence I cannot eſpy the leaſt part of that *Canaan*; no degree of heavenly *comfort* allowed me; and therefore, *Sir*, I have reaſon to conclude that this is a deſertion not onely of *outward ſenſible conſolation*, but alſo of *inward* and *ſpiritual*; my *ſufferings* abound *outwardly*, and no *conſolations inwardly*; The reaſonable faculties of my ſoul, my underſtanding and my will, want their wonted *light* and *joy*.

Yea, while I relate it, this *ſpiritual deſertion* grows upon me; and though the other day, it was but a partial privation of comfort, the *degrees* of joy abated onely, in me, yet now it is a *total* privation of joy and comfort, for I am wholly bereft both of ſenſible, and ſpiritual conſolation; my ſenſitive, and my reaſonable faculties all of them, full of darkneſs, and dul-

dulneſs, and barrenneſs, and therfore, *Sir*, I beſeech you diſpatch ſome further directions to

Your languiſhing friend.

The Anſwer.

Diſtinguiſheth between a deſertion of grace, and of comfort; and that this *may be inflicted by God, in love, on the beſt Saints on Earth; and for what reaſons.*

Sir,

YOurs I received, and think not ſtrange that your diſeaſe ſhould *continue*, yea *encreaſe* upon you.

There is a ſpiritual deſertion of *grace*, and a ſpiritual deſertion of *comfort*; The firſt, when God withdraws his *holy ſpirit*, and divine *grace*, from us, for ſome notorious ſin committed againſt him. This latter, when he withdraws onely the *joy*, and *comfort* of that grace which is ſtil with us.

And this latter kind of *ſpiritual deſertion*, may be in the beſt Saints of God, upon Earth; I may deſire, but I cannot hope (upon good grounds) any of them ſhould be alway freed from it.

Now, *Sir*, this ſpiritual deſertion of comfort, is inflicted upon us, one while in Gods *diſpleaſure*: we neglect thoſe comforts too much, or by ſome other ſin, or infirmity we provoke God, to call in thoſe mercies, and to withhold them from us.

Otherwhile they may be withdrawn by God, and yet *not* in his *diſpleaſure*; the *Sun* of righteouſneſs may be as *bright*, behind the cloud, though not ſo *evident* to us; Gods countenance may ſhine towards you, when it is thus intercepted from us.

Now whether God hath withdrawn theſe comforts from you in his *diſpleaſure* againſt you, as a puniſhment for ſome ſin, or otherwiſe, I cannot pretend to diſcover; upon examination of your ſelf, you wil be able to diſcover it, and to inform your ſelf; And if it ſhall appear to you that this *deſertion* is not inflicted upon you in diſpleaſure, then though both ſenſible, and ſpiritual conſolations be denied you, and that totally, you need no ſalve (I trow) for that *ſore*: It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth good in his ſight.

If thus, you may happily diſcover ſome greater mercies comming towards you, with

with this your *drineſs* and *barrenneſs*. This *Spiritual deſertion* may be inflicted upon you, either *Ob charitatis profectum*, as an incentive to love; God will hereby ſtir up a greater love in your ſoul, towards him, then formerly. He takes away theſe comforts from you becauſe you loved them too much; And he would abate your love towards theſe *comforts*, that it might be beſtowed more fully upon the *Comforter* himſelfe: If God will not have any love of yours run waſt upon *conſolations*, but elevate it all to *himſelf*, you have no more reaſon to complain, then the Child, from whom the Nurſe is withdrawn, that the Mother might gain its chiefeſt affections: Or ſuppoſing God beſtowed comforts (eſpecially thoſe ſenſible) on you, becauſe of the infirmity of your condition, but now hath ſtrengthned you to ſubſiſt without them, you have no more reaſon to complain, then the *Criple* that is healed, for the loſs of his *Crutches*.

Or Secondly, this *Spiritual deſertion* may be inflicted upon you *Ob humilitatis cuſtodiam*, as a preſervative againſt pride: that humility may grow more in you; a *Thorne* in the fleſh, leſt you ſhould be ex-

alted above meaſure with the abundance of Heavenly *Conſolations*; And if ſo, who will complain though the honey, and the honey-comb, be taken away from him, when he hath eaten ſufficient, and is in danger to ſurfet by the reſt?

Or for ſome other ſpecial vertue, which God will now conveigh into your ſoul. Thus ſome ſpiritual advantage you may hope to gain, by this your deſertion.

But on the other ſide, if upon examination, it appears or be probable, that God hath withdrawn theſe *conſolations* from you in *diſpleaſure*, then you know your task is to enquire into your ſelf, for what ſin, or neglect, and omiſſion it is, that God is ſo diſpleaſed with you; and, when that is diſcovered, an unfained *humiliation* for it, and an earneſt *endeavour* againſt it, for the time to come, is required at your hands.

Yet, after this *examination*, if you remain ſtil doubtful of the true cauſe of your *deſertion*, ſo that you cannot reaſonably enjoin your ſelf, a *ſpecial* humiliation for any particular ſin, as the Actor, or acceſſory in it, a *general* humiliation for your ſins, and corruptions, will certainly advantage you, and may probably eaſe you,

you, in this your preſent condition. And to this examination, together with that particular (if you find cauſe) or this general humiliation, I now leave you, earneſtly praying that by theſe, or ſome other means, you may be healed, and ſin no more. *Sir*, I am

Your ſervant in our Lord Jeſus.

The fift Letter.

The pious ſoul lamenteth the loſs of her Comforts, as taken away in Gods diſpleaſure; and propoſeth an abatement of Worldly Comfort, as a means to recover Spiritual.

Sir,

VPon a *view* of my Actions ſince the laſt ſolemn *humiliation* of my ſoul, I find many defects and failings; and though I cannot charge my ſelf with any one notorious ſin unrepented of, (Bleſſed be God my upholder) yet while I am compaſſed about with ſo many infirmities and imperfections, negligences and ignorances, I cannot but fear, too probably, that for ſome of thoſe it is, that God in *diſpleaſure* withdraws thoſe his *Comforts* from me.

And can there be a greater heart-sore then this, that my deareſt *comforts*, ſhould be taken away, yea driven away, from my ſelf, by my ſelf! That I my ſelf ſhould be ſo deeply acceſſory to all thoſe *deſertions* I complain of! That I my ſelfe ſhould quench thoſe holy *fires*, and then complain for want of the *warmth* & comfort of them! That I ſhould provoke God to hide his face, and to withdraw the light of his countenance from me, which I value infinitely more then all the pleaſures, and profits, and honors of this world!

And now if I be conſtrained to dwell in this *Meſech*, and to have my habitation in theſe dark Tents of *Kedar*, what will my life profit me! I will not return to the pleaſures of the world, and what is my life then, if theſe *Pleaſures* of heaven return not unto me!

Lord, can I not ſee thy face, & enjoy the light of thy countenance, conſtantly, and live! Is it not far better for me then to die with it, then to live without it! therefore I will ſtill ſeek thy face, thy face Lord will I ſeek. Oh let me ſee it, and enjoy it again, though I die for it! Yet if it be thy will, my God and my Lord,

that

that I walk all the daies of my life in this *Darkneſs*, that with theſe diſconſolate fears and tremblings I work out my ſalvation, Loe I am ready to doe thy will O God!

Now, *Sir*, for the particular account you may expect from me of mine *examination* of my ſelf, I muſt not conceal from you, that I have ſome jealouſies that worldly-mindedneſs may be ſhrewdly acceſſory to this my *deſertion*: I am too buſily (I feare) imploied in the things of this world, to have and retein that portion of heavenly comfort; I traffick too much on this ſide *Jordan*, to have thoſe ſweets of the Land of *Canaan*.

That of our Apoſtle, 2 *Tim.* 2. 4. *Nemo militans Deo*; no man that warreth under God, entangleth himſelfe with the affaires of this world, is not I conceive proper to the Clergie, and Divines, but a general rule for all Chriſtians alſo; whoſoever fights under Chriſts banner againſt the world, the fleſh, and the Divel, muſt not be entangled with the things of this life. And though, *Sir*, I cannot charge my ſelf with ſin in this kind, being entangled beyond the bounds of lawfulneſs with earthly things, yet I conſider,

ſider, that my worldly emploiments, though lawful, may not be expedient; for I have read in my books of Devotion, that whoſoever takes his ful lawful pleaſure in the things of this world, to ſuch an one, God (commonly, and moſt juſtly) denies the extraordinary pleaſures and delights of his Spirit; and one way preſcribed, not to be ſcanted in theſe *ſpiritual comforts*, is by abating ſomewhat of the ful lawful meaſure of theſe *worldly comforts*. This I fear, may be one reaſon why God withdraws his wonted ſpiritual *comforts* from me.

If I could abridge my ſelf a little more of that delight I take in the ſtudie of Hiſtorie, and Philoſophie, and the like, if I could abate ſome litle of that comfort I ſolace my ſelf with, in friends and children; If I could be a litle more ſtreitned in theſe *worldly comforts*, I ſhould wel hope to be enlarged again, in thoſe *ſpiritual comforts*: I ſhall therefore labour to ſatisfie my ſelf with ſome few *Omers* of worldly joy, though an *Ephah* be but a lawful meaſure; who knoweth but God may turn my former *Omer* of ſpiritual *joy*, into an *Ephah*, and give it me, heaped up, and running over? I read of ſome

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who have ſped thus by it, and therefore I ſhall hope for the like mercy from God, and this hope is ſome ſupport to

Your fainting friend.

The Anſwer.

Adviſeth to love the Comforter himſelf more then the Comforts.

Sir,

YOu delight (it ſeemes) in *Corroſives*, (as moſt in your condition do) more then in *Cordials*; you inſiſt onely upon Gods *diſpleaſure* againſt you, in taking away your conſolations, not at all reflecting upon the *Cordial*, that theſe may be taken away in *love*.

Yea, though God be offended with you for your many failings, and imperfections; Yet an offended God (howe're it is with an offended friend) may afflict in *Love*. Now after you have caſt down your ſoul, by Humiliation, raiſe it up, I pray, by the meditation of this. Your love, that moſt precious and excellent affection of your ſoul, ſhall by this deſertion, be advanced to God, and appropriated to him alone. Now you ſee how weak that Love is, when

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we love God onely, or chiefly for that parcel of mercy, or comfort which he is pleaſed to communicate to us; and that the *ſtrength* of love is, to love that infinite mercifulneſs, and incomprehenſible goodneſs, that is in him; to love God more for that *Ocean* in himſelf, then for theſe few *drops* he ſheds down upon us; for his own *goodneſs*, more then for our *benefit*, or *comfort* by it: this, this is the ſtrength of love. And if your former *comforts* hindred you from this love of God, your preſent *deſertion* may further you to it; & when it hath ſtrengthned your *Love*, it will encreaſe your *Humility* alſo; Gods *chearful* countenance towards you may (unhappily) *exalt* you, but you cannot but walk *humbly* before a *frowning* God: And where this love, and this humility is, patience will have its perfect work. Which I ſpeak the rather of, becauſe this *drought* and barrenneſs of our ſouls may through the corruption of our Nature, and temptation of the Divel occaſion ſome *impatience* in us. As an Antidote therefore againſt impatience, I beſeech you to conſider that there are many dear children of God, who never taſted at all of thoſe *comforts*, whereof you have had ſtore;

and

and then you wil turn your *complaints* for the preſent want of them, into *praiſes* for your former enjoyment of them; and after that Hymn of thankſgiving, you may cloſe your Meditations, and Devotions, with a *Collect* or two, that God would call to remembrance his tender mercies, and his loving kindneſs which he hath ſhewed to you, heretofore; In which I ſhall be a joynt-ſuitor with you, but eſpecially for all *ſpiritual graces* which are needfull for you, and ſo I reſt

Yours in our Lord Chriſt.

The ſixt Letter.

The pious ſoul ſtill lamenteth the loſs of her comforts, yet wholly reſigneth her deſires of them to Gods will.

Sir,

I Peruſe your *directions* daily, for I am ſtill in my *diſconſolate* condition, my *drineſs*, my *drineſs*, woe is me! I cannot diſſemble it. Thoſe *Comforts* have held up my weary hands, in prayer, they have ſtrengthned my feeble knees; In the publike Congregation, in my private cloſet, medi-

meditating in the field, and on my bed, at all times, and upon all occaſions, they have been my companions, and my ſupporters alſo. They have made me more forward in Chriſtian duties, more cheerful in them, and more plentiful of them, then otherwiſe I fear I ſhould have been; but now they have all forſaken me, and I am left weak alone: How freely could I reſign up my ſelf to God, and his ſervice? when I conſidered it onely, as a yeelding up my ſelf to a continual affluence of Heavenly comforts and pleaſures; How eaſie was it for me to deſpiſe the delights and vanities of this world, when I abound with thoſe? Who can part with ſuch boſom-friends, who have been ſo helpful and beneficial to me, and not complain? The loſs of the pleaſure, and delight I took in them, was grievous, but this loſs of help and aſſiſtance from them is an heavy burthen.

But theſe very *helps* and advantages which I have had by *Conſolations*, may come (you have told me) without them; yea, ſometimes theſe their proper works may be performed, better without them, then with them. And that is it I enquire after now. I bleſs God that he hath afforded

forded me the comfort and help of thoſe pleaſures, thus far onward in my way, and I truſt to him now for other guides and helps.

And hereupon I reſolve (Gods grace aſſiſting me) to caſt off my ſolicitous, and anxious care about them; Deſire them I ſhall, and ſeek them, becauſe I can be helped by them, but after that (if I find them not) I ſhall not complain ſo loud, becauſe I truſt to be helped without them; And I ſhal cloſe thoſe *Collects* (you adviſe to) for theſe Conſolations, with *Non mea, ſed Tua, fiat voluntas, Domine.* Not mine O Lord, but thy will be done: for though I be denied them, yet in my drineſs will I continue my ſervice (ſuch as it is) to thee my God, and by thy grace perſevere in it to my lives end. For the performance of which I deſire the benefit of your praiers, whereby you ſhall ſtill oblige

Your engaged friend.

The Anſwer.

A Caution, leſt the ſoul, being now indifferent whether ſhe hath comfort, or not, ſhould prove ſlothful in holy duties.

Sir,

I Beſeech God to ſtrengthen you in your humble, and free ſubmiſſion unto his bleſſed wil, and though he ſtil hide his countenance from you, yet you promiſe to ſerve him, to bring him what your dulneſs and barrenneſs wil allow to have; and from him you ſhall receive, what you have not: If not your *former*, yet ſome *other helps* and ſupplies; yea, the Lord himſelf wil be your companion and your guide: Caſt all your care upon him, and he will take the ful care of you: And if he leads you no further by the glimmering light of a *Star* (your own Conſolations and delights) it is (I hope) becauſe he will ſhew you the bright luſtre of the *Sun* it ſelf, that goodneſs & mercifulneſs which is in himſelf, and by that lead you, and guide you to your journies end.

And concerning thoſe praiers, and holy exerciſes, which you perform to God

God, in this your *barrenneſs* and drought, ſeeing they are not undertaken at all for any taſte, or ſweetneſs you have in them, but purely to ſerve God, and meerly and alone to perform his wil, ſurely they are very acceptable in his ſight: I know this barrenneſs is ſeldom without objections againſt the performance of theſe duties, as if they might be as wel left undone, as done; But you will be able (I hope) to anſwer all thoſe oppoſitions, and contradictions, and force your wil, againſt your wil, to go on ſtil in diſcharging thoſe holy duties, as wel as you can, and as chearfully, though not ſo wel as you would.

There goes alway along with theſe our Conſolations, ſelf-love, and ſometime too much of it too; It will concern us therfore to moderate it; to that purpoſe, when we propoſe to our ſelves, the exerciſe of any duties, or the practice of any Chriſtian vertues, our own Intereſt, Pleaſure, or advantage (ſpiritual though they be) muſt be the leaſt things we aime at, leſt ſelf-reſpects blemiſh all. And if thus, (though in the depth of deſertion) our love is more commendable, and thoſe duties and vertues more acceptable to God, for whoſe ſake wholly we perform them

them, then thoſe exerciſes and duties we formerly had ſo much comfort in; and upon this *reaſon* I ſtil adviſe you, not to ſet too high an eſteem upon theſe *Conſolations*, your own delights.

Yet here I think fit to enter a *Caveat* or two. I have known *Torpor* and *Acedia*, indevotion and ſluggiſhneſs come under this vail; while we pretend not to affect theſe our own *delights*, *coldneſs* in our Praiers, and *lazineſs* in our Devotions too commonly creep in upon us. Take heed therefore that you retein your inward *fervor* and ſpiritual *zeal*, in the midſt of your *drineſs*, and barrenneſs; you muſt beware leſt you loſe your fervor, as well as the ſenſe, and the comfort of it. Let not your intention and attention in your Devotions any whit abate (if poſſibly you can prevent it) while your outward conſolations are denied to you. It is a chief deſign the Divel hath upon us in theſe our *deſertions*, to make us *weary* of the ſervice of God, and to ſteal away from us our devotions, and our fervor too.

And now ſeeing you have attained (God be thanked) to ſuch a condition and ſtate, that you ſubmit your ſelf wholly

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to God, and will be content, though he ſtill withold theſe your conſolations, this is a time, that the *Divel* is ordinarily buſie to dart in his *temptations*; And if he can bring in, with this your *indifferency*, *oſcitancy*, and *coldneſs*, in thoſe ſervices you perform, and a *lazineſs* in holy duties, he gains too much upon you.

A ſecond *Caveat* I ſhall add, with reſpect to others rather then to your ſelf at preſent; That they who *abound* with theſe *comforts*, be not too *ſecure*, upon the ground of conſolations (eſpecially if they be *ſenſible* ones onely) that their perſons, and performances are accepted with God, that they make not theſe, the (τὸ κριτήριον) chief *trial* and teſtimony of their juſtification, and ſanctification; the *teſtimony* of their Faith & Repentance cannot deceive them, theſe *Conſolations* may.

But all this is added, *ex ſuperabundanti*; Since your ful *reſignation* of your deſires and delights to God, and your indifferency for theſe conſolations, this advice might have been ſpared: nothing is now neceſſary from me, but my prayers to God for you, wherein I ſhall never faile you, for I am

Your ſervant in Chriſt Jeſu.

The

The Seventh Letter.

The ſoul feeleth (as he conceives) a partial privation of grace, and growing ſuſpicious of the ſincerity of his faith and repentance, feareth a total privation of grace, in her.

Sir,

THat intimation of yours, that your advice to me might be ſpared hereafter, hath theſe many months kept back my hand from writing to you, but now I can with hold no longer, and your former trouble breaks in upon you.

Not that I have revoked my *reſignation* of thoſe my *Conſolations*, to Gods bleſſed will, far be it from me; But in another matter, (as I conceive) and of higher concernment, I now make my addreſs to you, for *direction* and comfort.

That *total privation* of *comfort*, under which I have ſo long laboured, hath now at length brought on (I fear) a *partial* privation of *Grace*. My ſenſible comforts are gone, and my ſpiritual comforts are ſtil deteined from me, and now I doubt that

that even grace it ſelf, is decaying too; *Joſeph* is not, and *Simeon* is not, and ſhal I loſe my *Benjamin* alſo? all theſe things are againſt me.

Sir, I have endeavoured what I could to keep my ſoul vigilant, and my affections erect, and attent at Praiers, (according to your caution to me) but now they all ſlack, and a general *drowſineſs* duls them all at the howr of praier, more then at any other time; at that ſpiritual, more then at any civil employments; And therupon I complain, that the *grace* of fervor and zeal is departed from me; and in other holy duties the chearfulneſs, and ardor I was wont to have, doth now wholly fail me.

When I read of ſome of the ſervants of God, who were ſo elevated in their Devotions, and Meditations, that whether in the Body, or out of the Body, God onely knows, and then reflect upon mine, now adaies ſo *heartleſs*, and ſo dul, that whether with the ſoul, or without the ſoul, it is hard to ſay; that while I am at thoſe holy exerciſes, my ſoul ſhould be carried any whither, rather then into heaven, yea, downward rather then upward, this preſſeth me ſore. How

can

can ſuch ſervice be *reaſonable* from me, who have a ſpiritual ſoul? or *acceptable* to God, who is a *Spirit*, and muſt be worſhiped in Spirit? This I lament as a *privation* of that *grace* of Fervor and zeal; My ſoul is not filled with it now, as formerly.

Neither may I diſſemble it, ſometimes I fear *worſe*, even a *total* privation of this, and of all other *graces*, and vertues; Either that God hath withdrawn his holy graces from me, or elſe that I was never truly partaker of them; that I flattered, and deceived my ſelf, when I hoped that God had accepted my *Faith* in Chriſt, and my *Repentance* to my juſtification.

The other day while I was judging my ſelf for my ſins, an *allegation* was caſt in, againſt my *Repentance* alſo, and that was accuſed of *unſincerity*, and *hypocriſie*; And proof was brought in of it; My *grief* and ſorrow for my *ſins*, was compared with my *ſorrow* for *other* things; The ſmall bottle of my penitential tears was brought forth, and ſet by the bottle of my tears, for worldly croſſes; and when it appeared how enlarged I had been in theſe, and how ſtraitned in thoſe, that I have wept far more for the loſs of a friend,

friend, or of a penſion for ſome yeares. then for the invaluable loſs of my Lord God, eternally; This plea was proſecuted againſt me, with a great deal of importunity, and though I my ſelf was both the advocate & the judg in the caſe, yet I could not be ſo partial either in pleading, or in determining, as to acquit my ſelf; But upon this *proof* and evidence was forced to condemn that *repentance* (mine own though it were) as feigned and unſincere, or incomplete at leaſt, and therefore *unacceptable* in the ſight of God.

And upon this, how *heavy* and ſad my guilty ſoul is, cannot be expreſſed; ſince this my *Benjamin* is miſcarried too, ſorrow will ſoon bring me to the grave.

And then, when I am thus low, it is hard to keep my ſelf from ſinking lower; for *allegations* I find produced againſt my Faith, and my Love to God: and thus it is reaſoned. If I have not true faith, all I have done yet, is ſtil *fruitleſs*, I am ſtil in my *unregenerate* condition; But if I have not true *love* to God, I have not true *faith*, and if I have not *joy* in God, I have not *love* of him. Theſe are fruits of the ſame *Spirit*, and where *one* is, *the o-*

ther cannot be wanting; *Love* results naturally from *faith*, and *joy* from *love*, and they continually accompany each other; these fruits are alway in a *cluster*: Or they are all links of one chain, if any one link be taken off, the chain is quiet broken: Seeing then apparently I want *joy*, how can I have *love*? and if I have no *love*, I am not better then a sounding *Brass*, and a tinckling *Cymbal*.

Alas *Sir*, I cannot alway keep these *allegations* against my self, out of the court of my conscience; And though I condemn my self very often, yet I dare not be too peremptory, in these judgments against my self, for I cannot but hope better things: And whether I should cherish those fears (which are strong already) or these weaker hopes, is that, wherein I desire your advice and counsel; And the Lord who onely knoweth the spirits of men, direct you in it: this is the prayer of

Your assured friend.

The

The Anſwer

Preſcribeth a ſtrict examination of her Faith and Repentance: and ſheweth theſe fears and jealouſies may be the Temptations of the Divel.

Sir,

WHether you wil take part with *Fear*, or *Hope*, you your ſelf muſt reſolve: yet ſomewhat I ſhal ſay, concerning the *fears* which ariſe in you, that you are not juſtified before God, nor reconciled to him.

It is good to *fear* alway; it keeps us low, leſt *pride* enter; and it keeps us active, leſt *ſloth* ſeize upon us; and ſo we humbly labour, to make our *Calling* and *Election* ſure; and when I ſadly conſider, how many miſcarry through Spiritual *ſecurity*, not at all ſuffering themſelves to miſtruſt their condition towards God, I am not forward to caſt out fear; Yet there is *torment* in fear, and a firm *hope*, wel grounded, (if it ejects not fear it ſelf,) wil wholly allay the torment of it.

Whether your *faith* and *repentance*

were as they ought to be, is between God, and your own ſoul: But if your faith were lively, with love, and truſt in God, and your repentance unfeined, aſſure your ſelf, it was no other ſpirit but the holy Spirit of God (who can neither deceive us, nor can be deceived) who ſaid unto your ſoul, *Chriſtus eſt juſtitia tua, & ſalus tua*; Chriſt is thy juſtification, and thy ſalvation.

And for the *Plea* put in againſt your *Repentance*, though I cannot diſcern what your Repentance is, yet this I can diſcern, that your objection, is no convincing argument againſt the *Truth* and ſincerity of it.

For though I muſt grant that the inward *ſorrow* for *ſin*, and the inward *ſorrow* for *worldly* loſſes, are both from the *heart*, and griefs both of the ſame kind, yet it will not follow, that they both ſhould have the ſame *outward expreſſions*; For there may be an heart full of true ſorrow for ſin, where there is no ſad countenance, no trembling lips, nor weeping eyes; theſe are the *overflowings* of grief in the *ſenſitive* parts, and are more readily, and more fully ſhewed by us, for *worldly*, then for *ſpiritual* matters:

and

and the reaſon is this; Becauſe theſe *ſenſitive* parts (whence they proceed) are more affected with bodily and worldly things, then they are (or can be) with ſpiritual, and heavenly; and the reaſon of this, is, becauſe worldly things are neer theſe ſenſitive parts, whereas ſpiritual are far off, and thereupon have a greater command over outward ſenſitive expreſſions, (as tears and the like) then ſpiritual things can have over them, at a diſtance.

I deſire therefore that you would examine your ſorrow for ſin, *above*, not *beneath*; at the *ſpring-head* of ſorrow, your heart, and reaſonable ſoul, not at theſe *neather pools*, your eys, and the tears of them; by that you cannot eaſily, be deceived by theſe you may.

And if upon *examination*, you find that your heart hath been, and is truely humbled for your ſins, and afflicted at the remembrance of them; and doth alſo firmly reſolve againſt them for the time to come; if you be ſorely diſpleaſed, both with the ſinner, and with the ſin, abhorring your ſelf, and your tranſgreſſion, you may cheriſh and confirm your hopes, that God is reconciled to you, through Chriſt. If you can produce theſe *rational*

teſtimonies (which are grounded upon the *Word* of God) be not I pray very ſolicitous for the teſtimony of your ſenſitive faculties.

And after the *examination* of your ſorrow for ſin, if you think fit to be ſo ſtrict with your ſelf, as to require that this your grief for *ſin*, ſhould exceed that your grief for *worldly* things, yet it is very unreaſonable, and againſt all rules of *Courts*, to condemn your ſorrow for ſin as defective, upon the bare teſtimony of theſe outward expreſſions; for as they are a *ſingle* witneſs, ſo (now it appears to you) they are a *partial* witneſs too. Enclining more to ſorrow for worldly things (and giving fuller evidence for them) then to ſorrow for ſpiritual things: and therefore til it be otherwiſe proved, and fully too, that your *ſorrow* for ſin, is *unſincere*, paſs not, I pray, your ſentence of Condemnation upon it.

And yet before you need acquit it, you may examine the neighbouring *Paſſions* of your ſoul, about this very matter of *your reconciliation with God*. If there appear no *unſincerity*, or *hypocriſie*, in your *love* of God, and in your *hatred* of ſin, you have little reaſon to ſuſpect your *repentance*:

pentance: And for trial of the ſincerity of theſe *Paſſions*, I pray ſuppoſe your ſelf in ſuch a ſtrait *that you muſt either loſe houſes and poſſeſſions, wife, and children, and honor, or the favor and love of God, by committing thoſe your former ſins again:* and then conſider *which of theſe two you would chooſe:* and if you reſolve (by the grace of God aſſiſting you) to *loſe all the profits, pleaſures, and comforts of this world, rather then the favor and love of God* by a relaps into ſin, *your love* and *hatred* being thus *ſincere* and *upright*, you muſt in juſtice then acquit your *repentance and ſorrow* from that aſperſion of *hypocriſy* and *unſincerity*, and cenſure him for a *ſlanderer* who caſt in that *allegation* againſt it.

And now for that other *allegation* againſt your *faith* and *love*, becauſe of the abſence of *joy*, I deſire you to conſider, that,

There is a *joy* which is the *fruit* of the *ſpirit*, and it conſtantly ariſeth from *faith* in God, and *love* of him; and there is the *fulneſs* or *ſuperabundance* of that *joy*: the firſt is as a ſmal *ray* only; the ſecond, as a *beam* from the *Sun of righteouſneſs*; and both theſe are *gifts* of the bleſſed Spi-

rit, and yet very different; the firſt as a *grace*, the ſecond as a *reward*; that *ray* of *joy* is a *grace* of God, and by the *light* of it we may keep our feet from ſtumbling and falling; this *beam* of *joy* is a *reward* from God, and by the exceeding *luſtre* of it we are encouraged and cheared in our walking with God: and hence it appears that the firſt is a moſt neceſſary fruit of our *faith* and *love*, and doth always accompany them. We *love* him not unles we rejoice in him, and of this *joy* is the Apoſtles precept, *Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I ſay, rejoice:* whereas this ſecond is a bountiful expreſſion of Gods *extraordinary goodneſs* towards, not an *ordinary grace* in us; a fore-taſt it is of the *joys* of heaven: The firſt is as the Chriſtian ſouls *daily bread*; this ſecond, as their *feſtival chear*.

Now Sir, if you have that *daily bread*, you are of Gods houſhold and family, though you ſeldom taſt of his *feſtival chear*: and I hope you want only thoſe *dainties* which once you were fed with, and that this *bread*, which is common to all the family, is your ſouls *daily food*; that you have ſtil in you a *ray* of *joy*, though

though not a *beam*: and if ſo, this *joy* is a good evidence of your ſincerity in *faith* and *love*; and therfore you may cenſure him alſo for a *ſlanderer* who caſt into the court of your conſcience this *allegation* againſt your *faith* in God, and *love* of him.

Thus Sir I comfort my ſelf with hope, that you neither flattered your ſelf heretofore (in accounting your ſelf reconciled to God through Chriſt) nor that there is ſuch a *total privation* of *grace* in you as you complain of.

And for that *partial privation* of *grace*, the abatement of your *fervor* in praier; in anſwer to that I ſhall premiſe, Firſt, that there is a *gift* of *praier*, and a *ſpirit* of *praier* or *ſupplications*; and many have the *gift* of Praier, (to expreſs their own, or other mens deſires to God in praier readily, and in fit words) who have not the *ſpirit* of *Praier* and *ſupplications* (that is, *fervor* and *zeal*, and *ardency of ſpirit*) and on the contrary, many have this *grace* of *fervor*, who have not that *gift* of *Praier*; and of this *ſanctifying grace*, *fervor* and *zeal*, it is (as I conceive) the Prophet *Zachary* ſpeaks, not of this *gift* of *Praier*, which is only an *edifying grace*.

Secondly, that exact *intention* and perfect *fervor* with all our heart and all our mind in the whole worſhip of God, is a treaſure not ordinary in theſe earthen veſſels; while we carry about this *body* of *fleſh*, the *ſpirit* and *imagination* of man wil be wandring oft-times, and we cannot be wholly *intent* in the *ſervice* of *God*.

Now Sir, your complaint is not I perceive for want of the *gift* of Praier, expreſſions in ſupplications, but for the decay of the *fervor* and *zeal* you formerly had: but whether you charge your ſelf with that *infirmity* of our *mortal ſtate* and condition only, that you are not *wholly intent* and *attent* at your *Praiers*; or whether you complain as guilty of ſome *notorious wandrings* of thoughts at your performance of *holy duties*, which are truly *perſonal faults*, I underſtand not, and therfore I anſwer ſomwhat to both.

Exact and *ful intention*, with all our ſoul, in the worſhip of God, we muſt aim at, and ſtrive for, and lament our defects in it. Our vain imaginations, our worldly thoughts, and what ever divert us from the *attention* to that holy buſineſs, we have in hand, though we conſent not to them, nor ſtay upon them with a-

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ny delight, but reject them as fast as they arise in our minds; yet these, and every one of these we must lament and bewail, and be displeased with our selvs for those our failings; lament these I pray as the *natural infirmities* of your *condition* in the *flesh*, though (as I conceive with submission to better judgments) *not as your personal faults* and sins: these argue not any decay of the *grace* and fervor, only an *imperfection* in it, as there is of all *graces* in the best Saints of God on earth.

But then, secondly, if your complaint be of some *notorious wandrings*, some *stay* upon vain imaginations, and some *delight* in them, which take your soul off from its *intention in prayer*, these are sins and *personal faults* in you.

And even these sins are too common with many of the children of God, and therfore it is not improbable you may complain of them.

And this *indevotion* and want of recollecting our thoughts home while we are at holy duties, is sometime a *cause* of our *drought* and *barrenness*; we use not well that *talent* of *fervor* and *zeal* which God gives us, we stir it not up, and therupon we grow *barren* and *dry*: and another

while

while this is the *effect of our barrenneſs*, we want our former *comforts* and *delights* in *holy duties*, and thereupon we cannot be ſo *intent* at them as formerly. Theſe our *comforts* are (as you allude) like *Aaron* and *Hur* to *Moſes*, very uſeful to hold up our *weary hands in prayer*: *fervor*, and *intention* do ordinarily decreas for want of *comforts* & *delight* to ſupport and ſtrengthen it.

Now if this decay of *zeal* and *fervor* be in you, as the *cauſe* of your *barrenneſs*, I need not ſay how ſevere you ſhould be in *judging* your ſelf for bringing all theſe inconveniences upon your own ſoul, by your own ſins; and if as *the effect of this your barrenneſs*, yet repent you muſt of your *neglect* of *this grace* of God, that you ſhould ſtir up this your *fervor* no longer then it was for your own turn (your *comfort and delight*) when that could not be ſerved by it, that you *neglected* it, and ſuffered it to decay in you. And then after this you muſt endevour to *ſtrengthen your feeble knees, and to hold up your heavy hands*, that your ſoul may recover daily, and encreas again to its wonted *fervor*, and then go on beyond your former meaſure, adding *fervor* unto *fervor*, and *ſtrength* unto

ſtrength.

ſtrength. It is for *Gods* cauſe and for the *love* of him you are *fervent* in this your *barrenneſs*, and therfore let it far exceed that *fervor* you were wont to have for your own ſake, becauſe of your own *comforts* with it.

But now, as I muſt not ſooth you up in the leaſt degree of ſin, or want of due *fervor*, and therfore I have ſaid this; ſo on the other ſide, I muſt not ſuffer you to be dejected and caſt down without a juſt cauſe, and therfore I ſhal ſay more, and tel you, *I hope better things of you.*

The *quick ſenſe* you have of your *want* of *fervor*, and the *preſent greif* which you expreſs redounding from it, is a probable Argument to me, that your *fervor* is as much at preſent as formerly it was, though it be not ſo *ſenſible* to you, and neither that *grace* of *fervor*, nor any other in you can be ſo *evidently perceived* by you, while you labour under that *total privation of comfort* (whereof you complain) as at other times they may.

And if ſo, that which you complain now of, is only this, that the wonted *comfort* of your *fervor* and *zeal* (which formerly you had in Gods ſervice) is now withdrawn from you, ſo that you can neither feel your

your *comfort*, nor your *fervor*; not that your *fervor* is abated, but that the *comforts* in which it did reflect to your ey are taken away for you; it is not now to be discerned by them. And then it wil appear, it is Gods *mercy* you want in *comforting*; not his *grace* in *assisting you* in *his worship*; and so it is the same diseas you complained of before, though now it comes towards the hight and violence of it: *Consider I pray what I say, and the Lord give you understanding* to discern aright what your wants are, and how they may be supplied: to that purpose I shal pray for you, as becometh

Your servant in Christ.

The

The eighth Letter.

The ſoul farther complaineth of a total privation of grace, ſomewhat too evident in her, becauſe ſhe wants all ſpiritual joy.

Sir,

THe want of thoſe *dainties* (as you term them) cannot but trouble me, that once I ſhould have *fulneſs of joy*, but now unworthy of it, be thruſt down as I deſerve to a *lower meſs*; but now and then I fear that even the *daily bread* (you ſpeak of) is denied unto me, yea, the *crums which fall from my Lords table*, ſo little *joy* and *delight* I find in *holy duties*: and further, if ſometimes I have inſtead of *bread* a *ſtone*, hard and dry, without any ſoftneſs and moiſture, ſurely then I want not only thoſe *dainties* and *delicacies* for my *pleaſure* and *comfort*, but even this *bread* for my nouriſhment: and this hard fare hath made me ſo moderate in my deſires, that though I have not ſuch an *allowance of joy*, as is *expedient* to *commend* my *love*, yet if I could conſtantly perceive that *portion of joy* in me, which is *neceſſary* to *evidence* that a *love* there is in me, I ſhould

reſt

reſt ſatisfied with it, and poſſeſs my ſoul in peace and quietneſs: for what greater comfort need I deſire then this, that my *joy* and *love* is ſuch as is acceptable in Gods ſight; and that notwithſtanding my manifold imperfections I am in the favor of God through Chriſt? If I be of Gods *family*, though but a *dore-keeper*; if I be at his *table*, though of the *loweſt meſs*, this would be a great *comfort*, and a full ſatisfaction to me.

But alas, Sir, inſtead of my former *Omer* of *joy*, I do not now find this *Ephah*! And if my *joy* wholly fails, what *love* can there be in me? and now of late I have been ſearching up and down my ſoul for thoſe other *graces* and *virtues* which *Gods Spirit had formed* in me; and whereas they ſhould grow and increas more and more, for a while they alſo have *languiſhed* in me, and now (I fear) they are quite *dead*: my *comforts* were no ſooner taken away from me, but theſe *graces* I perceived *maimed* and ſorely *lamed* in me, when I was once *ſtripp'd quite* of *them*, I preſently felt my ſelf, *wounded* in *theſe vitals of grace* and *virtue*, but now I am *quite* ſtripp'd (I fear) of *theſe* two, *ſpoliatus conſolatione, & ſpoliatus gratiâ* alſo.

My

My ſins, my ſins, have excluded the *comforts* of *God*, and the *graces* of *God* alſo, from my ſoul; I am leſs then the leaſt of them all: I call to mind the days that are paſt when my ſoul enjoyed a ſweet *communion* with God, when there were continual *entercourſes* ful of unſpeakable *comfort* between *my Lord* and *my ſoul*; when he was pleaſed frequently to lead me into his *banqueting houſe*, and there *chear* me with *flagons* and *apples*; when my *ſoul* was *elevated and ſtaid up* with his *conſolations and graces*; and when I recall this, my ſoul ſinks into the valley of ſorrow. For now *my God* paſſes by me as a *wayfaring man*, and is become *a ſtranger* unto me, *viſits* me not, either with *comforts* or *grace*.

And when I hear my God aggravating *Solomons ſin, becauſe he had ſhewed himſelf unto him twice*, 1 *King*. 11. 9. I tremble and fear leſt that ſhould be a *charge* againſt me alſo, that, after *God* had *appeared* unto me, with moſt kind *viſits of comforts*, and with a moſt *ſweet fellowſhip of graces ſo long together day by day*, I ſhould provoke him by my tranſgreſſions to with-hold *theſe good things* from me.

But Lord, though my ſoul faint for theſe thy mercies, yet will I hope in thy word; *though*

though mine eys fail with looking after thee, saying, when wilt thou comfort me? though I am become like a bottle in the smoak (parched and dry, filthy and unfit for any service in thy Tabernacle) *yet will I not forget thy power nor thy mercy*, Psalm. 119. v. 82. &c. Thou who *gavest* these first, canst, and wilt *restore them* to me again; if I be beyond *cure* and cannot be *healed* (becaus I am *dead*, and my *vitals* of *grace perished*) yet I may be *revived*: *Enliven and quicken me* (*O Lord I beseech thee*) *after thy loving kindness, and so shall I keep thy testimonies*: Joyn with me, I pray Sir, in these my Praiers, for I am

Your friend and

servant in Christ.

The

The Answer.

Graces may be in the soul, and not perceived by the soul; some have spiritual joy, and feel it not, because they wil not; others cannot.

Sir,

I Am heartily sorry that your *fears* and *jealousies* concerning the main of all, your *regeneration and acceptation* into the *favor of God, encreas* rather then *decreas* in you; I cannot answer *positively* to any of these *fears* which arise in you; *God* only who knows your *heart* is able *fully* and *undoubtedly* to certifie you, whether you be one of his *servants* and *family* or no; & whether your soul be *wounded* or *quite stripp'd* of his *graces*.

Yet this I can answer in general, First, that though the *spirit* of *man can discern* its own *dispositions and qualifications* what it hath, and what it hath not, yet whether they be *natural inclinations*, or *spiritual graces*, it cannot *naturally discern*; the *holy spirit* of *God* must *witness* with *our spirit, concerning the things which are given us of God*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 12. so that to know the

graces

graces of God, which are in us, is *from God.*

Secondly, *from God*, as a *gift*, not as a *grace:* and therfore I believe ſome *ſervants of God* have many *graces* in them when they have not this *gift* of God to *know* they have *them*: the Apoſtle indeed ſays, *He who lacketh theſe graces is blind*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 9. But he ſays not, he who is blind and cannot ſee them, lacketh them; our *faith* and all our other *graces* may lie *buried* and overwhelmed with the *diſtruſtful ſuggeſtions* of the *fleſh*, ſo that we cannot ſee them: theſe *graces* may have *private operations* in us, *ſecret* to us, yet *manifeſt* to *God*; the *ſpirit* within us may *groan*, and *God hear* it, when *we do not.*

And thirdly, I hope it is *thus* with you at this time, that your former *graces* and *virtues* are in you, though you want this *gift* to *diſcern them:* do you not give way too much to theſe *fears* and *jealouſies* of your *fleſh*, ſo that *God* ſuffers your *graces* to be *overwhelmed* with *them?*

And now in particular, concerning your *joy* and *love* of God; I anſwer, that this *Ephah of joy* (as you tearm it) which is the *conſtant fruit of love*, though it be *little* in reſpect of the *Omer*, yet in it ſelf, it is

great

great and very conſiderable; who can meditate upon his own *intereſt* which he hath with *God*, that he is *his God* and *his Savior*, and not have great *joy* in himſelf? though there be no *ſenſible conſolations* at all to accompany this *joy*, yet there are many *dear ſervants of God*, who live by *it*, and are all their lives long *ſupported* with *this joy alone*, and a very good *evidence* they account *it* of their *love* of God, and their *faith* in him.

And ſome there are who have this *joy* in them, but *feel it not*; and therupon they complain for want of its *evidence* to their *love* and *faith*; and theſe are of two ſorts, ſuch as *will* not *feel* it, and ſuch as *cannot feel* it. Some there are who are ſo carried away with *melancholy*, or with *temptations* from their *ghoſtly enemies*, that they make it a main part of their buſineſs to raiſe *doubts and fears* in themſelves; ſpend their time and wit in framing *objections*, and in ſtarting *jealouſies* againſt themſelves, and thus *help forward their own affliction*, and in the mean time what ever arguments of *comfort* they hear, or read, or *feel* in themſelves, *theſe* they let *paſs unregarded*; they are very *quick* at *objections*, yet very *ſlow*, and dull at the *ſolu-*

tions

tions of them; wheras a far leſs degree of reaſon and wiſdome would anſwer all their *objections*, and reſolve all their *doubts*, if they would bend their ſtudy or their thoughts that way. Theſe I reckon among them who have the *joy* of the *ſpirit in them*, but *feel* it not, becauſe they *will not*. They look only upon the *dark ſide of the cloud* (which is for the Ægyptians) wheras the *light ſide it is*, which is to be a *guide* to the *Iſraelites*; they are all for *fears and doubts*, not at all for *comforts* to themſelves. And though I will not, yet I pray ask your ſelf the queſtion whether you be not of this *form*.

If not, yet others there are who have this *joy* of the *ſpirit*, and *cannot feel it*; *it* is in them, & ſo are *other graces* too, though they *cannot diſcern it* nor *them*. They have this *Ephah of heavenly Manna*, yet becaus they think of the *Omer*, which others happily have, and they themſelves have formerly had, they want it, while they have it; it is their *bread* and the ſtaff of their *ſpiritual life*; yet becaus it is more *dry*, and *leſs ſavoury* then heretofore it was, they account they receive *no nouriſhment* from *it*: and there are many of this *form in Chriſts ſchool*; and though *fears* & *doubts* be

be high in you, yet I hope you are not excluded; your *graces* are ſtill in you, and as *vigorous* as ever; *no deſertion* at all of *grace* in you. For it is ordinary that the other *deſertion* of *comfort* (when it is towards its hight) raiſes up all theſe *fears* and *doubts* in us, and our *ghoſtly enemies* take us at this *diſadvantage*, and labour what they can to *foment our fears* in us.

The School-men are wont to ſay, that all the while our *moſt bleſſed Savior Chriſt* lived upon earth, there was (as it were) a *traverſe drawn* between the *beatifical viſion*, and the *ſenſitive faculties of Chriſts humane ſoul*: and that when our *Savior* was upon the *Croſs, and cried out, My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? then the traverſe was drawn between the beatifical viſion, and the reaſonable faculties of his humane ſoul.*

This may be applied to many good *Chriſtians*, and to you alſo, I hope. While you abounded with heavenly *comforts*, (as you firſt mentioned) you were (as it were) with *Chriſt* in *heaven, ful every where*, and *repleniſhed all over* with *joy* and *comfort*. Afterward in your *firſt dryneſs*, the beginning of your firſt *deſertion*, you were (as it were) with *Chriſt on earth*; all the

the time of that *deſertion of ſenſible comfort* there ſeemed to be a *traverſe* drawn between that ſuperabundant *joy*, and the *ſenſitive faculties* of your ſoul; and now in *this deſertion of ſpiritual comfort* in this depth of *barrenneſs*, you ſeem to be with *Chriſt* upon the *Croſs*; and the *traverſe* drawn between *thoſe joys* and the *rational faculties* of your ſoul: Heretofore in your *deſertion of ſenſible conſolation*, the lower part of your ſoul (her *ſenſitive faculties*) cried out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me!* but now even the upper part of your ſoul, *your rational faculties* alſo *want* the ſight of *thoſe joys*, and they cry out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken us!* now your *reaſonable* ſoul *fears* it is alſo *forſaken*, though (I verily hope) it is only a *traverſe* drawn between your *ſoul* and thoſe *joys*; it began at firſt with a *cloud darkning*, now it is a *groſs ſhadow eclipſing* the *comfortable light of the Sun of righteouſneſs*, and of thoſe *graces* which were heretofore *ſhining* in you: And if ſo, as there was a *true hypoſtatical union* between *God* and *man in Chriſt*, while he *cried* out *ſo* on the *Croſs*, though the *manhood* had *no viſion* of the *Godhead*; ſo there is ſtill a *myſtical union* between *God* and your

your *ſoul*, though you have *no viſion* nor appearance of *it*: *ſubſtracta eſt viſio, non ſoluta eſt unio*; *Love* ſtil *unites you* to *God*, and there is *joy* and other *neceſſary graces* with it too, though you wanted the *comfort* of *them* in your *ſenſitive faculties for a long time*, and *now* alſo in your *reaſonable*.

But an *Argument* you have againſt all my *hopes*, and that is, that none of theſe *graces* do *encreaſe* and *grow* in you, and therfore they muſt *wither* and *decay*.

Conſider I pray, there are *other graces* to grow in you, beſide *peace* & *joy*; & though the *light* of *Gods countenance*, thoſe *ſun-ſhine days* might *ripen them* moſt, yet this preſent *cloudy weather* may advantage your *growth* in *humility*, & *mourning*, & *ſelf-denial*; and if there be a *growth downward* in *theſe*, though you perceive *no growth upward* in the *other*, yet you are *increaſing* in *holineſs*.

And I muſt not conceal it from you (in this caſe you are now) that from *hence* are my *hopes*, concerning you, much *cheriſhed*; I perceive you *feel* your *want* of *grace*, and you *compluin* and *mourn* for it (which the *dead* cannot do) and you *confeſs* your *ſins* with great *humility*, *loathing your ſelf* for them, and you *truſt* in *God firmly*, that he can and wil reſtore you

(and these proceed not but from *life* and *vigor too*) to your wonted *comforts* and *graces*, and upon these grounds I wil stil *hope* wel of you.

Neither can I peremptorily assert that *God with-holds* this *joy and comfort* from you, *as a Judge punishing* you hereby for some *sin* or neglect; for *sometimes* he is pleased to *with-hold them* as *a Lord of the family*; he usually orders it thus for our *benefit*, for our *trial*, for the *exercise of our patience*, and waiting upon him, or for the *growth* of our *humility*, or for some other *spiritual* advantage to us; and *otherwhile* also God orders it so, for his *own wils sake*, because he is *Lord*, and we his *people*; not *judicially*, but *œconomically*, not for *punishment*, not *benefit directly* to us, but for some *design* he hath upon *us*; as he dealt with the *blind man* in the *Gospel*, who was *born blind*, not for the punishment of any sin, nor for the exercise of any virtue *primarily*, but for the *glory of God*.

Now Sir, my praier for you is, that as the *Apostles*, so you also with your *fear* may have *great joy*, S. *Mat.* 28. 8. & then as the *Macedonians*, in *the abundance of afflictions* you may have *abundance of joy*, 2 *Cor.* 8. 8. Sir, I am

Your servant in Christ.

The ninth Letter.

The ſoul now is perplexed with the affrightments of conſcience, and with the terrors of Gods moſt heavy diſpleaſure.

Sir,

MY diſeas encreaſeth yet more and more, and how e're I eſcaped hitherto, yet now it threatneth *utter ruin*. I have long wanted the *light* of *Gods countenance*, but now I eſpy him *frowning* againſt me; the *frowns* of a *Father*, *ſuch a Father*, (who hath been ſo merciful unto me, and ſo tender of me, formerly) who can bear? That from a *friend* he ſhould become a *ſtranger*; and *paſs* me by in ſtead of *viſiting* me! this was *grievous* unto me; but now that he ſhould come *againſt* me as an *enemy*! *Job* 19.18. that *he* who ſpake *peace* formerly unto my ſoul, ſhould for a while be *ſilent*! was *burthenſome* to me; but now that he ſhould *ſpeak bitter things againſt me*! *this is a lamentation, and muſt ever be for a lamentation.*

The ſame *hand* which was wont to *lead* me in the regions of *light*, and diſtribute to me *abundance* of the *comforts* and *joys*

of *heaven*, doth now *thruſt* me down into the *pit* of *darkneſs* and *ſhadow* of *death*, where I ſee the *terrors* of *deſtruction*, and where I feel the *gnawings* of *hel*.

My *ſins*, which were *removed* from me as far as the *Eaſt* is from the *Weſt*, are now *met together again*, *and ſet in order* before me; and they which were as *white* as *ſnow* or *wool*, are now *crimſon* and *ſcarlet* again. Yea, my *Savior* and *Redeemer* who was my *ſurety*, and *cancelled* the *bond* of *hand-writing* which was *againſt* me, is now become an *incenſed Creditor againſt me*. *Lord*, if I could *believe* in *him*, *he* would *quit* me and ſet me *free again*, *Oh*, *help thou mine unbelief!* and though I am *weak* in *faith*, make me *faithful* in *weakneſs*.

And yet my *hope periſheth* alſo, *Lam.* 3. 18. I was wont, when I could not *rejoice* in things *enjoyed*, yet ſomwhat, to *comfort* my ſelf in *things promiſed*, but now *things paſt*, and *preſent*, and *to come*, are all againſt me; and *fear* is on *every ſide*: *Lord* be thou *ſtil my hope* and *my fortreſs!*

Sir, I delight not to expatiate in declaring this my moſt ſad condition; I beſeech you to pray for me, for I am a moſt diſtreſſed ſervant of *Chriſt*, and

Yours in him.

The Answer,

Comforteth the soul in his most sad condition, and then it is alleged that all these troubles may be from the Devil.

Sir,

THis (if I be not deceived) is the *Paroxysm* and violent hight of your former *diseas*; and by your relation it appears that *Job* and *David*, and the *Church* of *God* in the *Lamentations* (whose words you use) were in your very condition, and I need not tel you how *dear they were* unto God.

And if it be *God* that is against you, I stil hope that it is for the *trial* of you, or for the *exercise* of you, or for some of those other ends I have named before; and assure your self if it be his *hand* that is thus *heavy* upon you, it may *bruise*, but it cannot *break* you.

And yet I rather think, that the *Lord inflicts* not, only *suffers* this against you; that it is the *Devil* who thus *buffets* you; and that these are his fierce *assaults* and *vehement temptations*. And if so, as *before* you were *conformable* to our *blessed Sa-*

vior in *deſertion of comfort*, ſo now you *fil up* that *conformity to him* by enduring alſo this *infliction* of *temptations*: was not *he tempted* to *beleive himſelf not the Son of God* by *generation*, as you are *to beleive your ſelf not his ſon by adoption?* and were not *terrors round about him*, when he was in that *agony*, and when he *cryed* out, *If it be poſſible*, let *this cup paſs from me?* as *terrors* now compaſs you about.

And if our *head*, and *our fellow-members* have *ſuffered theſe very afflictions*, I pray *think it not ſtrange concerning this fiery trial*: eſpecially conſidering that *this conformity to Chriſts ſufferings* wil *work out* for you *a conformity to him in glory*.

This in general: in particular concerning the horrid *repreſentation* of your *ſins before you*, as unpardoned: provide (I preſume) you do, that your *repentance* is *ſincere* and *unfeined*, and therefore the *pardon* of your *ſins* is *irreverſible*. The *ſprinkling* of the *blood of Chriſt*, hath *fully diſcharged* every *penitent* ſoul from the *guilt of ſin*; and this *gift* of the *pardon* of our *ſins* is a *gift of God without repentance*.

But this *ful diſcharge* is not *fully apprehended* by us, our *conſciences* cannot ſo *perfectly apprehend* the *pardon* of our *ſins*,

as

as *Christ perform it*; as the other *faculties* of our souls, so our *consciences* are *sanctified* in *part only*, not *wholly*; and therfore it is, that when *Gods spirit* ceaseth to *witness* with our *consciences* (as in this hight of *spiritual desertion* it doth) then we fal presently into *fears* and *doubts*, and *self-condemnings*: you want therfore only the *attestation* of the *Spirit of God*, with your *conscience*, to *embolden* and *encourage* you *firmly* to *beleive* the *forgiveness* of your *sins*: and if *that* once come, your *desertion* is gone, and your *disease cured*.

Now, Sir, if your *sins* through *Christ*, be *fully pardoned*, though this *pardon* be not *fully apprehended* by you, (which our *imperfect mortal state* wil *scarce* admit) nay though it be *not at all apprehended* by you, (which is the ordinary condition of the servants of God, when they are in *Desertion*) though you *walk in this darkness, and have no light, yet put your trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon your God. Isay* 50. 10.

But even in this, your Faith (you say) fails you; now therfore *call to remembrance the days of old*; those many *mercies*, and *favors*, which *God hath bestowed upon you*; and by the *experiences* of his fore-past

goodneſs towards you *ſtrengthen your faith*, in his *preſent*, and *future mercies*, towards you; Gods *mercies paſt* are *warrants* for *future mercies*, and where they have been *great heretofore*, they are *obligations*, whereby *God binds* himſelf to us, to beſtow *greater hereafter*. You therfore who have received *much* heretofore, to you *much more* ſhal be given *hereafter: Habenti dabitur*. Oh let this *ſtrengthen* your *faith*, and your *hope* too! But that is alſo out of your ſight, and ſeems to be *periſhed* too; and yet our Apoſtle ſaith expreſly, *Hope that is ſeen, is not hope*, *Rom*. 8. 24.

And therfore though *terrors be round about you*, *Truſt* (I pray) in *Him*, who *knows* (by his own experience) what it is to be *deſerted* of all *comfort*, and to be *tempted*, and moſt violently *aſſaulted* by the *Devil*; *truſt* in *Him*, *who knows whereof you are made*, and when you are able to bear no more; *truſt* in *Him*, who (if not before) yet then, wil certainly *help* you, and deliver you: And in the midſt of your *fears* and *terrors look up* unto *Him*, who hath promiſed to *look down upon you*, *who are poor*, *and of a contrite Spirit*, *and who tremble at his Word*, *Iſay* 66. 2. Hide your ſelf under *his own wings*, *for a little*

mo-

moment, and the Indignation wil be over-paſt: In the mean while I ſhal pray with that Devout *Father, Oh modicum longum, pie Domine, longum eſt, & multum valdè nimis!* Thou haſt promiſed, *Lord,* to *afflict but for a moment*; *Alas holy Lord, it hath been a long, very long moment, and too too long: It is enough Lord, it is enough, let this Cup paſs*; This is the earneſt Prayer of Him, who is

Your ſervant in Chriſt.

The tenth Letter.

The Soul refreſhed again with the Return of her former Conſolations.

Sir,

I Return you many thanks, for your Letters of ghoſtly *Direction* and *Comfort*; and for your Prayers for me; and the more heartily, becauſe they prove ſo behoofful and advantageous to me; The *floods* of *afflictions*, and the *waves* of *terrors*, *beat vehemently upon my ſoul*, but the *Lord, who ſitteth above the water-floods* hath ſupported me; and I have now ſeen *the wonders of God in the Deep*: The *Wonder* of

His wisdom in the variety of his dispensations, of *Comfort* and *Joy*; and then of *grief* and *terror*; to *several men, severally*: And the great *wonder* of his *Power* and *Goodness*, in upholding my *faint Soul*, against the *violence* of all these *afflictions*; and now also in *freeing* and *delivering me from them all*.

I tarried the Lords leasure, and he hath now again *given me my hearts desire*; *He hath brought my feet out of that horrible pit, out of the mire and clay, and set me upon an Hill* and *a rock*, and *there doth he order my goings*.

I have *found* Him *whom I sought*, the *love* of my *Soul*, and the *joy* of mine *Heart*, *my God*, and *my Lord*.

Now I *enjoy* his *Presence*, I *feel* his *influence*; and the *light* of his *Countenance* also *shines* upon me; *O Lord I will praise Thee, for though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is soon turned away, and thou now comfortest me*. Surely, Sir, my *sufferings, compared* with the *Age* of my *fulnesse*, but especially with the *eternity* of *comforts* which I shal enjoy, were but for a *moment*, *a very short, short moment*, but the *twinckling of an Eye*: and now my *joyes* return: I now behold the *face of God, and feele his*

com-

comforts in the *ſervice and worſhip of him*; and therefore every *hour* ſeemes *five*, til the *hour* of *Prayer* comes; till by *contemplations* and *meditations* I bring *my God* to *my ſoul*: The *days* for the ſolemn *worſhip* and *ſervice* of *God*, I could wiſh every one of them a *Joſhua's day*; the longeſt, is too ſhort for me; and my wonted *hours* of *Devotion*, and *meditation* are too narrow a confinement for them; And when I am fitted with the *comforts* of *God*, my *heart dilates* it ſelf further, by looking upon the *joys* of *heaven*; for if there be ſuch *joy*, during the *ſeed-time*, how infinite is the *joy of harveſt*?

Praiſed be the Lord who hath heard my complaint, and anſwered my Prayers, and that with advantage: I asked my former *comforts*, and he fils me with them, far more then before; he hath been more bountiful to me, then I dared preſume to ask. Now I perceive it was ſo far from being *prejudicial* to me, that it was *moſt expedient* for me, *that Chriſt ſhould go away from me*, with theſe his Conſolations; for now He hath *ſent the Holy Ghoſt the Comforter* down into my ſoul, with far greater *delights*, and with more Heavenly *joy*, then ever heretofore; And if *Barren-*

neſs

ness be so *fruitful*, and yeilds such a plentiful *harvest*, oh my soul be thou never hereafter (though thy *Barrenness* should return again) dejected, or troubled at it: Resolve thou rather with *Habakkuk*; *cap.* 3. 17. Though there *be no Oile of joy*, nor *wine of comfort*, no *nor blossom on the Olive tree, or Vine*, (no appearance, or hopes of any *Oile*, or *Wine*, for *refreshment*) yet wil I *love* the *Lord*, and *rejoice* in my *God*; And then press forward (O my *soul*) towards that of *Job*, cap. 13. 15. *Etiamsi occideres*, though I be parched and withered with *drought*, and consumed with *barrenness*, though thou killest me (O Lord) with *it*, yet wil I *love* thee, and *trust* in thee.

O, *Sir*, rejoice with me, and bless *God* for me, the *God* of my *joy*, and my *comfort* for ever; *To him be all glory, and honor, and thanks*, for this his infinite mercy to me.

I pray *Sir*, let not this my health and tranquillity of mind deprive me of your letters; I am now at good leasure to receive what further *directions* you shal thinke fit for me, and thereby you shal stil engage

Your servant in Christ.

The

The Answer.

Sensible Consolations, which proceed sometime from the holy Spirit, may proceed also from our own temper, or from the evil spirit: and therfore here is a limitation annexed to the former Directions.

Sir,

I doe truely sympathize with you, and rejoice for the *return*, and *encrease* of your *joys*; Now you *see* how *good* and *gracious* the *Lord* is, to all that *call* upon *him* and *wait* upon him patiently, according to his *promise* by the *Prophet*, Isay 54. 7. *With great mercies wil I visit thee again, though for a smal moment I have forsaken thee.*

Your afflictions were like *Job's*, in *body*, in *estate*, in your *friends*, and in the *barrenness* of your *spirit*, and in the *terrors* of your *soul*; and your *deliverance* is like *his* also (in these spiritual things:) you have already received *double* for all your *losses*; for a *cup* of *affliction*, *vessels* of *joy*; for *disconsolate daies*, *moneths* of great *delight* and *comfort*.

Continue I pray, your *indifferency*, to *abun-*

abundance or *want*; Let not the hight of your *joies* puff you up, nor the depth of *deſertion* caſt you down; or any condition diſhearten you in the *ſervice* of *God*: Learn to be as wel content, to be *with Chriſt*, on *Mount Calvary*, ſorely ſuffering, as on *Mount Tabor, ful of joy and comfort*; And as hertofore *Chriſt* was your onely *hope* in your *barrenneſs* and *ſorrow*, ſo let him be your *Rock*, and your *Caſtle* ſtil; and *rejoice* not ſo much in your *Conſolations*, as in *him*, who is the only true *joy* and *comfort* for ever.

And now *Sir*, ſeeing you invite the trouble of my Letters ſtil to you, I cannot more fitly begin, then with a *limitation*, to my former *directions*.

They were preſcribed to you, preſuming (not without good grounds) that you are in the ſtate of *Regeneration*, and fitted they were onely for you, and for ſuch as you are, the *true ſervants* of *God*, and therefore no way ſerviceable to any others: And that this my *limitation* of them, may appear to be *neceſſary*, I ſhal inform you, that theſe *conſolations* (whereof I have hitherto written) are *ſometimes* a ſpecial *gift* of *God*, which he beſtows upon ſome men to *invite* them,

them, and *allure* them by the *sweetness* of them to *his service*, and one whose *heart* is *stil stony may receive the word with joy*, S. *Mat.* 13. 20. And at other times God bestows these consolations *after regeneration* to *strengthen* them, *regenerate* and *encourage* them in his *service*; and because they want it *most* in their *weak beginnings*, he *then* therfore *more ordinarily*, and more *plentifully* bestows them.

Secondly, these *consolations sometime* proceed from our own *temper*, and from our *natural constitution*: some *men*, and many *women*, have such *soft constitutions* and *tender tempers*, that the affections of *joy* and *grief* are very soon raised in them, they may soon be dissolved (as it were) into *sighs* and *tears*; and they are soon *dilated* and *enlarged* with the *chearful expressions* of *love and joy*: whereas men of *other tempers* cannot so readily express their *grief* or *joy*.

And although (as of all other *tempers* so) of this *softer constitution*, some have these *consolations* given them from God, (as above expressed) yet it is most evident that thousands of men and women abound in *outward and sensible consolations*, not as a special *gift* of *God*, but as *naturally*

turally proceeding from their *own conſtitution.*

And as the *natural* man may have them, ſo may the *carnal* man alſo; for *thirdly*, theſe *conſolations* are *ſomtime* raiſed by the *Devil*; and although the *Devil* may raiſe theſe *conſolations ſomtimes* in the true *ſervants* of *God*; yet it is moſt *likely* and *ordinary* that he ſhould raiſe them in the *wicked* and *profane*, (over whom the Prince of darkneſs hath moſt power.)

And theſe *conſolations*, though they ſpring from ſeveral *fountains*, from *heaven* (the *holy Spirit*) from *earth*, (our own *temper*) from *Hel*, (the *evil ſpirit*) yet are they all ful of the *ſame comforts* and *delights* to the *outward ſenſitive faculties* of the ſoul; but with this difference, the *firſt* are *holy* and *good*: the *ſecond neither good, nor bad* in themſelves (though eaſily improvable to good) but *indifferent*: and the *third* (as their Author is) *evil* and *dangerous.*

And hence it follows that theſe *conſolations* are common to *four* ſorts of men; *thoſe* from *heaven* to *ſome* who are *called* and *choſen*; and to *others* alſo, who are only *called, not choſen*: *thoſe* from our *natural conſtitution*, to meer *natural* men:

and

and thoſe from *Hel*, to *carnal and ſenſual men*; and that *one ſort only*, of theſe *four*, are the *true ſervants* of God. And therfore as there may be true *repentance* and *love* of God, and *joy* in that true ſervant of God without *theſe*, (as I ſaid before) ſo now I ſay theſe *conſolations* may be, and are in *three ſorts* of men without true *repentance*, and without true *love* and joy.

And now, having *limited* my former *counſel* and *directions* to the *beſt* ſort *only* of men, I ſhal take my leave; and praying conſtantly for you (as you do I hope for me) commend you to the *eſtabliſhing* and *perfecting grace of God*, and reſt

Your ſervant in our

Lord and Maſter Chriſt.

The

The eleventh Letter.

The ſoul aboundeth more and more with Conſolations; and is now at leiſure to enquire farther into the cauſes of ſenſible conſolations.

Sir,

I Stil abound with theſe *conſolations*, and I cannot miſtruſt them to come from any other *fountain* then from *heaven*; my *ſenſitive faculties* have ſome ſhare in *outward conſolations*, but my *rational faculties* overflow with *them*: and therfore I bleſs *God* the *Author* of *theſe* and of all true *comforts*: and theſe ſtil *encreas* in me; the *oil* of my former *joy* was as that in the *widows* little cruiſe; but now I have ſuch ſtore, that (with the other *widow*) I want *veſſels to hold it*.

Oft-times I cry out (with the *holy man* I read of) *ſufficit Domine, ſufficit; it is enough Lord, it is enough, I am ful of joy*, brim-ful, and can hold no more. And *ſomtime*, I ſay with that holy *Ephraim* (whom I read of) *Recede paulliſper Domine, quoniam vas hoc fragile eſt: Come not ſo near, O Lord, with theſe heavenly raviſhments*,

ments, becauſe I want a veſſel fit for them; this of my fleſh is ſmal and weak, and if thou ſteppeſt not back awhile, it wil even now break aſunder: I could not conceal this *loving kindneſs of the Lord*; but your laſt letter is it I muſt ſpeak unto; and I hope it wil not be accounted *curioſity* if I deſire to be inſtructed further concerning thoſe *ſenſible conſolations.*

I know by late experience, that a *true ſervant of God* may be without *theſe conſolations*, but that any ſhould have them who is not the *ſervant of God*, ſeems ſtrange unto me; that the *rational faculties* may have true *joy* in them, when there is none in the *ſenſitive faculties*, this I have felt; they have been in the *inward*, and not in the *outward man*; but that the *outward man* ſhould have them, and not the *inward*; the *fleſh* (which is *more backward* of the *two to any thing that good is*) and not the *ſoul* and *heart* (as it muſt be if carnal men have them) this is not clear to me.

And *again*, that men of *ſoft natural tempers* ſhould have theſe *ſenſible conſolations oftner* and in *greater meaſure* then men of contrary *tempers*, this ſeems evident enough; (as ſoft wax receives a deeper impreſſion then hard, becauſe it is more fitly

fitly diſpoſed for it) but, that theſe *conſolations* (which are concerning *God*, and in the performance of *holy duties*) ſhould proceed from the *natural* temper of any man, this is not ſo evident.

And *thirdly*, that the *Devil*, who labors all he can to quaſh theſe *conſolations*, and *deprive* us of them, that *he ſhould beſtow them* upon any man, but eſpecially that he ſhould at any time *befriend* the *ſervants of God with them*, this ſeems very ſtrange to me. I preſume (you ſee) upon your wonted favor, and if your occaſions permit you to write concerning theſe particulars, it wil be a further obligation upon me, who am

Your friend and ſervant

in Chriſt our Lord.

The

The Anſwer.

That ſenſible conſolations are one of the Devils ſpiritual temptations, whereby he deceiveth many Papiſts and Proteſtants.

Sir,

I Am moſt ready to ſatisfie you in your three particulars: it is moſt true that *Corpus aggravat animam* (as the wiſe man ſpeaks) *the fleſh pulls the ſoul back* from any thing that is good; and though *both* of *them* (in our corrupt ſtate) are *backward* to every good thing, (as to *grieve* for *ſin*, and to *rejoice* in *holy duties* to God) yet the *fleſh* and the *body* is the more *backward* of the *two*; and how that ſhould partake of theſe *conſolations*, and the *ſoul* be without them; that the *ſenſitive faculties* ſhould at any time have them, and not the *reaſonable*, in this you deſire further ſatisfaction.

That of the *Apoſtle* may be applied to this very particular; *The ſpirit is edified*, and *the underſtanding remains unfruitful*, 1 *Cor.* 14. the *ſpirit*, that is the *ſenſitive faculties* of the *ſpiritual ſoul*, may be *edified*, though the *underſtanding*, the *rational*

nal faculty be not, S. *Aug.* The tone, or the elocution, or the action and gesture of him *who speaketh in an unknown tongue* may work upon *them*, not upon *this*.

And you may consider further, that ordinarily God works upon the *soul* by the help of the *body*; by the *ey*, or the *ear*, and so upon the *imagination*, and by *that* upon the *rational faculties*; and thus the *soul* is stirred up to apprehend this or that, and to *hate* or *love* this or that, and then to *grief* or *joy* for this or that; and therfore there may be some *motions* to *hatred* and *love*, and to *joy* and *grief*, and some *beginnings* of *them* also, in the *outward* parts and *faculties* which ascend not so high as the *rational faculties*; or ascend not with that power, as to make an impression in *the wit* and *understanding*: and so the *body* (which is the more *backward* of the *two* in affection to good) is *before* the *soul* in order of time, *God* working *by* the *body upon* the *soul*.

And that this remote motion (which begins in the *outward sensitive faculties*) to *sorrow* for *sin*, and to *joy* in *Gods service* is from, and by the *grace* of *God*, stirring them up thereunto, may be an answer to your *second* particular.

That

That our *conſtitutions* are *tender* and *ſoft*, and that we are by them *eaſy to be wrought* upon for the expreſſions of *joy* and *grief*; this is a *gift* of *God* not common to all: but that ſuch a melting *temper* is *actually* moved and *wrought* upon, to vent thoſe expreſſions of *grief* for ſin, and thoſe of *joy* in the *ſervice of God*, and not on the *contrary* (as *naturally* all *tempers* do) this is the *ſpecial grace of God*, this is a *motion* of the *bleſſed ſpirit*, ſtirring up the *ſenſitive faculties* to invite the *rational faculties* to *mourn* for *ſin*, and to the *love* of *virtue*.

And now it wil not ſeem ſtrange to you (ſeeing *outward things* do moſt commonly ſtir up theſe *ſenſible conſolations*) that the *body* ſhould be ſomtime affected with them, and not the *ſoul*; the *ſenſitive* and not the *rational faculties*: For, firſt, theſe *outward things* are *nearer* to the *ſenſitive faculties* then to the *rational*: and ſecondly, they have a greater *aſſimilation* or *likeneſs* to the *ſenſitive* then to the *rational faculties*; and it is no mervail that things which are *like* one to the other, and at a *litle diſtance* one from the other, ſhould have an influence one upon another, when they have no influence at all upon

upon things *unlike* them at a *greater distance* from them; that, when *outward* and *ſenſitive* things work not upon the *ſpiritual* and *rational faculties*, which are *far off* them, they may, notwithſtanding, work upon the *ſenſitive faculties*, which are *next adjoining* to them.

And now for your *third*, that theſe *ſenſible conſolations*, are *ſomtime* raiſed by the *Devil*: that this *evil ſpirit can* work upon the *outward ſenſes*, and upon the *imagination*, in that manner, as to move *tears*, or *joy* in the *outward man* wil not be denied, and therfore that he *wil* move us in that manner, if he *can wreſt* thoſe *conſolations* to his advantage, this wil be granted alſo.

All that is queſtioned then, is, whether the *Devil can* gain any *advantage* to *himſelf* by our *ſenſible conſolations*.

Indeed his common project is to deprive us of *them*, that he may tempt us, for the want of *theſe comforts*, to deſert the *ſervice of God* as a *ſour grape*, and as *unſavoury waters*; and at other times for his own ends he is as ready to give them to us. When the Devil cannot prevail againſt us by *worldly temptations*, then he caſts *ſpiritual temptations* in our way; and for

for one of those, he useth these *sensible consolations.*

And this is most notorious in the *Popish Churches* abroad: The *Popish Priests* make it a chief part of their business, both at their *Prayers* and *Sermons*, to raise up in their people these *outward consolations*; which is not that I blame in them, but the many *mimical* and *histrionical gestures* and *postures*, which they use for this purpose; which are so *absurd* and *childish*, that they are as likely to move *scorn* in the *rational faculties*, (when they are examined by reason and Scripture) as *consolations* in the *sensitive faculties.*

And yet as *foolish* and *vain* as their *gestures* are, they produce this effect of *sensible consolations* most plentifully in many of the people; the *Devil* (I perswade my self) it is, who furthers these *Papists* with such *sensible consolations* in a most plentiful manner, that by the *outward gust* and *sweetness* of them, he may still hold them in love with their *errors* and *superstitions.*

When I see many of *them* more *affected* and *delighted* at their *devotions before a Crucifix*, or *an Image of some Saint or Angel*, then *before* the *most dreadful and merciful Lord* of all, *without these Images*;

when I obſerve that they have greater plenty of theſe *ſenſible conſolations* at an *Ave Maria*, then at a *Pater noſter*, and more at a *Pater noſter* (which language many of them underſtand not) then at *Our Father, &c.* in their mother tongue; that they more abound with them at their *praiers* to *Saints and Angels*, then at their *Praiers* to *God himſelf*; when I hear ſome of them ſay, while we were with you in the *Proteſtant Church*, though we employed our ſelves in *holy and religious duties*, with diligence and earneſtneſſe; yet we wanted thoſe *comforts* & *delights* in them which we now find: there are no *joys* like thoſe *joys* we now *taſt*, ſince we were *reconciled to the Church of Rome*, and ſince we gave up our ſelves to obſerve the *rites* and *ceremonies*, and *orders* of *that Church*; when I ſee and hear theſe things, may I then not fully conclude that theſe *conſolations* are not from *above*, but from *beneath*; not from *God*, but from the *evil ſpirit*, the *deceiver*?

And I wiſh heartily there were no ſuch *deluſions* in our *Proteſtant Churches*, and that theſe *deluſions* of the *Papiſts* had not any influence upon ſome of *us* of the *Reformation*.

Theſe

Theſe *conſolations*, which many *Papiſts* find in their *devotions*, are the *motives* which prevail with ſome of them (I doubt) to be ſo *frequent* at their *praiers*; *ſeven times a day* ordinary with many of them (ſo that we cannot deny (though we bluſh to ſay it) that many of the *Popiſh perſwaſion*, are more frequent at their *devotions* then *we* of *our perſwaſion* ordinarily are) whereas were their *devotions leſs affectuous*, and not ſo fraught with this *outward* and *ſenſible ſweetneſs*, it may be feared that they would ſtay at a lower number: And yet this *frequency* at their *devotions*, and their *affectuouſneſs* in *them* are arguments which have prevailed with ſome weak (though wel affected people) to forſake *us*, and to become *their Proſelytes*. And therfore if theſe *conſolations* plentifully ſcattered have bin, and are ſtil, the occaſion at leaſt of confirming *Papiſts* in their *errors*, and of ſeducing *Proteſtants* from the *truth*, who wil not grant that the *Devil* is the *Grand Agent* in them?

And now for our *Proteſtant* Churches, I have known divers *men*, but eſpecially *women*, very much affected at *Sermons* and *Praiers*, and ſo much the more if the *Curate* disfigure himſelf thereat by *uncomely*

looks, or with *minical gestures*; if he *draw* out his *Praiers* with a *whining tone*, and his *Sermons* with a *thundering voice*: whereas a *grave Divine* with a *sober carriage*, and *meet elocution moves* them *not* at all.

When I perceive *more weeping eys*, and *more chearful countenances* at the *singing* of the *Psalms*, *translated into meeter*, then at the same *Psalms* (sung too) in other translations, *in Prose*: And when I hear some say that they are more *edified* (that is, *affected with sensible consolations*) at *extemporary Praiers* (especially when they are *tuned out*) then at *composed Praiers* and *set-forms*, reverently pronounced; that at *those*, their groans and sighs, beat as thick as a *Pulse* in the *height of a Feaver*, and at the *divine Liturgy* of the *Church*, and other *godly forms* of *Praier* their *souls* are quite *barren*, and their hearts as hard and dry as flints; though in some of these I think those *consolations* may proceed from their own *natural temper*, or from *custome*, or *pre-engaged affections*, or so; yet I doubt the *Tempter*, that *Deceiver*, hath somwhat to do in most of *them*.

It is *he* (I fear) who is *active* to lul their affections *asleep* at our *divine service*, lest it should be *truly profitable* and

advantageous

advantageous to them; and as *busy* (I fear) *he* is in stirring them up, and *awakening* them at *these undigested extemporary Prayers*, and stirs up *false joys* and *griefs* with them.

And I am the rather induced to think that the *Devil* is an *Agent* herein, because I perceive that after a while most of these *men* and *women* take up an ill conceit of our *Church service*, and then, of all *set Forms*; yea, even some of them mislike that *set form* of our *most blessed Saviours most absolute and most perfect Prayer*. For, seeing their *outward comforts* are raised more at *extemporary Prayers* and *Sermons* then at *set Forms* and well-studied *Sermons*, hereupon they esteem *those* only, and neglect, yea, contemn *these*; and now they begin to think that there is no *devotion* in themselves, or in others, unless they shew themselves to be as tedious in *babling*, and as *vain* as the *Pharisees* were.

And I am further confirmed in it, when I observe, in some of our good *brethren* and *sisters*, very evil *consequences* from such *consolations*. For, first, they *cry up such Preachers* (whether *Divines* or *not*) who raise these *consolations* in them for the only *soul-saving Preachers in the country*;

and then to theſe *Sermons and Praiers* they muſt travail (though their husbands and maſters preſs them to the duties of their calling at home) and all *loſs* they account *gain*; the *pains* of travelling ſome miles, *pleaſure*; if theſe *conſolations* be raiſed or nouriſhed in them; and then farther, all other *Divines* they *contemn*, and *ſtrive with their Prieſts*, accounting them all *un-edifying* and *unprofitable* to themſelves and others, *without heat*, and *without light*.

And while they have the perſons of their own *Miniſters* in *admiration*, eſteeming them ſuch infallible guides, that they can neither *deceive*, nor be *deceived*, nor *miſlead*, nor be *miſled*, mark I pray what follows (though I cannot write it without a great deal of grief) in this *hony* of *ſenſible conſolations* there is wrapt up, too often, the *gall* of *error*, and *ſedition*, and *ſchiſm*; and many thouſands there are, who ſwallow them altogether.

Theſe their *admired Preachers*, at *theſe edifying Sermons*, *ſecretly* inſtil into them ſuch *dangerous opinions*; and after a while theſe opinions bring on *wicked practiſes*: For, as they *embrace error*, *thinking* it *truth*, and *reject truth*, *thinking* it *error*; ſo alſo they

they *chuſe evil, thinking* it *good*, and *refuſe good thinking* it *evil*; ſo that now, while they *reſiſt* the *higheſt powers*, and while they *perſecute* their fellow ſubjects, they are *perſwaded* they do *God good ſervice*.

And all theſe I ſum up as *evil conſequences* of that unhappy miſtake of theirs, concerning theſe *ſenſible conſolations*; that thoſe *conſolations* which they receive by the *Miniſtery* of *thoſe men*, and by the uſing of thoſe means of *extemporary Prayer* and the like, are the *gift of God*, and *evident ſigns* of their *edification* by them: wheras if they were the *gift* of *God*, & they truly *edified* by them, they would not only abound in ſome *virtuous practiſes* (ſuch as they chuſe as moſt ſutable to their own diſpoſitions) as of *Praier*, *zeal*, and *devotion*, and *attending to the ordinances of Gods Word and Sacraments*, ſtrict keeping the Lords day, and of liberality towards *them* of their own *way*; but in all other *virtues* alſo; in a ready performance of the *whole wil* of *God*, in ſubduing the luſts of *pride*, and *covetouſneſs*, and *anger*, and the like inordinate affections; in *charity* and *meekneſs*, in *humility* and *patience*; and in *obedience* alſo to their *natural*, *political*, and *eccleſiaſtical Parents*; and until I ſee theſe

principal virtues (as wel as thoſe others) practiſed by them, I cannot think (though I beg pardon if I judge amiſs) that theſe their *conſolations* are from *heaven*, *heavenly*.

And although they have now great *delight* and *joy*, in ſome *exerciſe of holineſs*; yet their *errors* and *wicked practiſes* (if once diſcovered to them) wil fil them ful of *torment*, and *vexation of ſpirit*; their *uncharitableneſs*, *fierceneſs* and *rage*, their *diſobedience* and *diſloyalty* to their *Prince*, their *contempt* and *ſcorn* of the *Clergy*, eſpecially of the *Reverend Fathers* and *Governors of the Church*, their *Sacrilege* in *ſtripping the Church* of her *Patrimony*, *Ornaments*, and *Liturgy*; their *ſchiſm*, their *oppreſſion*, and *perſecution*; the grief and ſorrow for theſe, and ſuch like ſins of theirs (when God ſhal pleaſe to open their eys) wil overthrow all this their *ſenſible joy and comfort*; then wil they perceive that they were not *edified*, but *deluded*, and *ſeduced* by theſe *ſenſible conſolations*.

And now Sir, if you pleaſe to conſider what a plentiful *harveſt*, here, and abroad, the *Devil reaps* from this *ſeed* of *ſenſible conſolations*, you wil not think ſtrange that

ſome

some of these (not to say most) come *not* from *God*, who sends *joy*, and *truth*, and *holiness* together: Nor that these *consolations* should be a *snare* of the *Devils laying*; wherby many of (our dear Christian brethren) *the Papists* are kept stil entangled in their sins, and errors; and many also of our dear Christian brethren, *Protestants*, are drawn into *dangerous opinions*, and *wicked practises*.

The only thing then you are now unsatisfied in, is, that the *Devil* sometime raises such *consolations* in the *servants of God*: the *Devil* is too cunning and malicious to let any of his old snares (especially these *spiritual snares*, which are less discernible then others) lie by un-employed; he stil casts them abroad, even among the *servants of God*.

When he observes some *servants of God*, to have such store of these *consolations* from *Heaven*, that all his *temptations* to divert them from *Gods service*, or to neglect these *comforts of God*, prevail as litle against them (as *new ropes* did against *Sampson*) that the *strength* of their *consolations breaks them as a thred*; and that they are stil *encouraged by them* to go on in the *service and worship of God*, then he is

ready to *add* to their *abundance*, and gives them *a fuller measure* of *consolations*, *adding store of his, to theirs*.

And after a while, when they have taken much *delight* and *pleasure* in the performance of *holy duties*, then he slightly goes about to perswade them, that they are more *holy* and more *devout* then they *were*, yea then other *men are*; because they *abound* more with such *consolations* then *they* themselves *formerly did*, or then *other men now do*; and then he *tempts* them to think that *these Christian duties* of *Praiers* and the like, whereat they feel these *consolations*, are the *only duties* required at *their hands*; that their *devotion at Praiers* and *Sermons* is *holiness enough*, they may rest satisfied that they are accepted with God, (who sends them such abundance of *comfort*) and need not betake themselves to the practice of any other *holy duties*: Thus if the *Devil* can make these *consolations*, as he made the *Corban* to the *Pharisees* (*a plea to excuse them from other duties*) he wil plentifully bestow them upon *those* he *most* labors to win to himself, *the true servants of God*.

It is reported of one of the *Fathers* (Saint *Hierom* I take it) that while he was

at

at the *holy Table of God* at *publick Praiers* for the *Congregation*, he was on a ſodain ſo *ſenſibly affected*, that his *fears* interrupted his *words*, and *ſpeak* he could not for *weeping*; and after that *pauſe of ſilence*, he checked the *tempter*, ſaying, *Etiam hìc ſtas inimice nequam! Doeſt thou purſue me even to the horns of the Altar, oh thou wicked enemy? Is not this a place of refuge, is not this a Sanctuary to be ſecure in from thy temptations?*

Thus the devout *Fathers* of old reckoned theſe *conſolations ſomtimes*, among the *temptations* of the *Devil*.

Oh that the Lord would diſcover to all *Papiſts* and *Proteſtants*, this *ſlie* and *ſubtle ſnare* of the *hunter*, and help us to *break it in ſunder!*

And now I hope you are fully ſatisfied. I have writ the more largly of them, that I might hereby give you warning that all is not *gold that gliſters*; all who appear to us like *Angels of light*, come not *from heaven*; and by what I have written, it wil not be hard to diſcern the *true* from the *counterfeit*, the *conſolations of God* from *thoſe* of the *Devil*.

And for a cloſe of all, though theſe *conſolations* of yours are (you hope) from the

the *holy ſpirit* (*who giveth every good thing plenteouſly*) yet there may be *too much delight* taken in them; and *temptations* there may come to *reſt in them*, to think your ſelf *not only* the *more happy*, but alſo the *more holy*, and the *more fervent for them*; yea, and *holy enough with them*: But labour I pray to *abound* (as with *comfort*) ſo in every *good work*, knowing that the more *comfort* you *receive*, the *more holineſs* you *muſt return*; theſe *conſolations* are extraordinary *hires* to *virtue* and *holineſs*; and the greater your *hire* is, the *more diligently* you ſhould *labour* in the *vineyard of God*.

And laſt of all, as your *comforts* and *virtues increaſe*, ſo endevour, that the chief of all *virtues*, *Humility* may *abound* and *encreaſe* in you daily: Have an eſpecial care leſt the *Serpent bruiſe the heel*, the latter end of your life, by *exalting you above meaſure*, for *the abundance of your heavenly comforts, and holy virtues*; This is the hearty wiſh, and moſt fervent prayer of

Your friend and ſervant

in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.

The

The twelfth Letter.

The pious ſoul encreaſing in holy fear and godlineſs, is much troubled with doubts, and ſcruples.

Sir,

IT is now almoſt a year ſince I wrote to you laſt, and though I had no preſent need of your directions, you might reaſonably expect ſome Letters from me; but the truth is, I am again conſtrained to write, and your readineſs to anſwer me formerly, and that ſo largely, makes me preſume (without any farther apology) to deſire your directions again. Not in that former Caſe, I have fully reſigned up my ſelf to God, and am learning in whatſoever ſtate I am (whether of comforts, or of ſorrowfulneſs) therwith to be content: but in another Caſe, concerning doubts, and ſcruples.

For, Sir, though in matters of faith (I bleſs God) I waver not, yet in matters of fact, both divine, and civil; ſpiritual, and temporal, many doubts, & ſcrupls (I know not what to call them) ariſe in me daily. And though God hath given me a moſt

ſincere

ſincere and unfeined deſire to pleaſe him, yet in many things I offend, in moſt things I fear and doubt.

One while I fear I indulge too much liberty to others, and too litle to my ſelf; another while, that I am too ſtrict to others, and too remiſs to my ſelf; and therfore I mete not to others, as I mete to my ſelf. I multiply quære's againſt my ſelf; whether the duty was wel performed, or not; this action lawful, or not; that word, or ſilence, ſeaſonable, or not: And for commerce, and traffick with my neighbors, whether this, and that bargain were juſt, not prejudicing my ſelf, nor over-reaching him. And when I would give thanks for any thing wel done, (through Gods grace in me) I think it might have been better done, and that therfore my thankſgiving may be deferred.

Yeſterday I conſidered and determined affirmatively in this, and negatively in that matter; and to day ſomwhat is ſuggeſted againſt the one, and the other: one day my conſcience excuſeth what I the other day judged amiſs; and to day it accuſeth for what I formerly judged aright: ſo that I ſcarce ſatisfie my ſelf in one duty, or in one buſineſs of ten.

Now

Now, Sir, if theſe motions be from the Spirit of God in me, I muſt hearken what the Lord God ſaith to my ſoul; at my utmoſt peril it is, if I receive not, and cheriſh thoſe motions: and if they be doubts I raiſe of my ſelf, they are not to be neglected, there is danger (my books tel me) in that; but if they be ſcruples, heeding them is dangerous; ſo there is danger, on every ſide.

And though I conſidered not the danger, yet I would not entertain doubts and ſcruples with ſuch humble obedience, as I deſire to receive the motions of the bleſſed ſpirit; nor examine theſe ſo ſtrictly at the dore, before I open, as I do thoſe ſuſpicious doubts and ſcruples.

And therfore I earneſtly deſire your directions how to diſcover when theſe motions in my mind come from the holy Spirit, and when they are doubts, or ſcruples of mine own: and then what to do in the caſe of doubts, and what in the caſe of ſcruples: how to ſuppreſs, or ſatisfie thoſe I have, and how to prevent the like hereafter.

For alas, Sir, much time which would be employed in performance of holy duties (in which it is fit I ſhould daily advance,

vance, as in grace and virtue) is ſpent every day in argument and diſpute, with theſe doubts, and ſcruples; which make me preſs for a ſodain Anſwer, whereby you may further oblige

Your friend and ſervant

in Chriſt our Lord.

The Anſwer.

A tender Conſcience moſt ſubject to ſcruples: The difference between a ſcrupulous conſcience, and a doubtful; and what to do when doubts, and what when ſcruples ariſe: Eleven directions to cure, or prevent a ſcrupulous conſcience.

Sir,

BY your laſt Letters I am comforted more and more, perceiving by them your progreſs and proficiency in holineſs, and purity: I much commend that univerſal care you have of all your ways, that you ſo ſtrictly examine every one of your actions before you undertake, and call them back again to your account, afterwards;

terwards; and that you ſet God before you, in all your ways.

Which care of yours would not be any whit abated, nor any while diſcontinued: you muſt ſtil *ſtrein* at *gnats*, leſt ſwallowving *them* make way for *Camels*, or many of them amount to a Camel: Eſteem not any thing ſo litle as to adventure upon it, without conſideration, leſt that (or your inconſideration in it) prove a ſin, though a litle one.

And with this care and diligent examination, you muſt ever retain thoſe humble thoughts you expreſs of your own performances: we do not all we ought to do, nor is that we do alway done ſo wel, as we might have done it, by the grace of God, that is in us: Or if we failed in neither of theſe, but performed all we ought, as wel as Gods grace did then enable us, yet are we unprofitable ſervants; and therupon the *Apoſtle* chargeth us *to paſs all the time of our ſojourning here in fear.*

This fear wil advance our aw and reverence to God; it wil quicken us in his ſervice, and make us more diligent; and it wil truly humble us, in, and after, all our performances.

And yet I muſt tel you, this *fear* is very prone

prone to be extravagant, and to run out into vain *doubts*, and *ſcruples*: And our task it is, to keep it, and to moderate it; not to caſt it off, nor yet to let it run out: If we keep this *fear* within its bounds and due limits, it wil bring forth thoſe effects of *reverence*, and *diligence*, and *humility*, and only *theſe*, and ſuch like, which it *naturally* produceth; but if it break out beyond its bound, this ſpurious brood of *doubts*, and *ſcruples*, which are only *accidentally* incident unto it, wil break in upon us.

And now concerning *your doubts* (though it be very hard to give particular ſatisfaction in general caſes, eſpecially in this of *doubting*, which commonly earrys with it much unſatisfiednes) ſomwhat I ſhal anſwer, and in the ſame method which you propound.

Firſt, how you ſhould know whether theſe motions and inclinations of your mind, to do this or that, or your doubt of this or that done, be from the holy ſpirit of God, or not?

It wil be very reaſonable to grant, that ſome (perhaps many) of thoſe motions, which you refer to, in your Letter, are from that bleſſed Spirit; either checking you,

you, for negligence, and remiſneſs in his ſervice; or ſtirring you up to greater care and diligence; and if they come from heaven, receive them you muſt with all humility, and obey them with all readineſs and chearfulneſs.

But that you may diſcern, whence the motions in you proceed, it wil be neceſſary to examine them; whether they be according to the law of right reaſon written in our hearts, and to the divine Law of God written in holy Scripture, and to other Civil and Eccleſiaſtical laws, to which we ow obedience: or whether they be contrary to theſe, or any of theſe: or (if neither according nor contrary to any one of thoſe laws) whether they be beſide them all.

If the motion within you ſtir you up, to do what is commanded by any of theſe laws, or to forbear what is forbidden by any of them, this you may conclude to be a motion of the holy Spirit, and whitherſoever it cals you, gird up your loins, and follow it. It is ſome virtue of piety, or juſtice, temperance, or obedience, or ſuch like, or ſome higher degree of them, it cals you unto.

But if it prove againſt theſe laws, contrariant

trariant and repugnant to theſe, or to any of theſe, though but to the law of man (at ſuch a time, and in ſuch a caſe, when it is binding) this is a temptation, either of the fleſh, the world, or the Devil, and then I need not tel you, that you muſt trample it under your feet. Theſe cannot be motions of the holy Spirit, who is the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and for ever; changeth not his truth, nor his poſitive laws, no more then his eſſence; no they are not ſo much as *doubts*, or *ſcruples*.

And then in the third place, if the motion be neither according to, nor againſt theſe laws, or any of them expreſly, but beſide them, of ſomwhat wherin theſe laws give no ſpecial command, nor prohibition; in ſuch motions, *doubts* and *ſcruples* wil ariſe: And how to diſtinguiſh which of them are *doubts*, and which *ſcruples*, wil be very material, and not very eaſy: yet ſomwhat I ſhal ſay, becauſe many good, and tender conſciences, are much troubled with them; and the moſt tender perplexed about them moſt.

As there are degrees of ſtupefaction in evil conſciences, ſome dul and drowſy, others in a dead ſleep, ſeared and cauterized (as the Apoſtle phraſeth it) ſo alſo there

there are degrees of quickneſs, and tenderneſs, in good conſciences; ſome far more vigilant and tender then others, which are good alſo: yet with this difference, the more ſtupefaction and dulneſs, the worſe that conſcience, though not on the contrary, the more tenderneſs, the better.

For there is a certain limit of tenderneſs in conſcience, which if we exceed, though we ſin not *in exceeding*, yet we ſcarcely avoid ſin *by exceeding* its limits; They who keep themſelves ſtrictly *within* thoſe bounds, are the ſafeſt; yea, and the beſt (though not the moſt tender) conſciences: for although a conſcience cannot be too good, yet it may be too tender; I mean not, that a conſcience may be too ful of care to ſerve and pleaſe God, but that it may be too ful of doubts and ſcruples in caring; and this I call too tender, becauſe its tenderneſs is very prejudicial in the effects of it.

Therfore, as you ought to bleſs God becauſe he hath given you a *tender conſcience*, ſo alſo you ought to crave of him, that it be a firm, and a reſolved conſcience; that it exceed not ſo in tenderneſs, as to abound with theſe diſtracting

doubts,

doubts and ſcruples: And as you muſt pray for it, ſo alſo you muſt endevour to procure this firm and ſtable conſcience, by grounding it upon a ſure foundation.

Now the foundation wherupon your conſcience ought to build, is a perſwaſion that this or that you are about to do, is lawful and juſt; and according to the ſeveral degrees of firmneſs and ſtability of conſcience, in ſeveral men; yea, in one and the ſame man concerning ſeveral actions.

If your perſwaſion be grounded upon faith in the Word of God, that you are perſwaded to do this, or that, becauſe the Word of God directs you in it, this is a ſure rule, and your perſwaſion I ſuppoſe moſt ful, and moſt firm. Or if your perſwaſion be grounded upon knowledg; that is, you are perſwaded to do this, and to forbear that, becauſe you know that the letter and meaning of the law directs you, both to this, and that, this is alſo a ſure rule, and your perſwaſion may be ful and firm: And when you do any thing upon ful perſwaſion, by the dictate of faith in the Word of God, or by the dictate of knowledg in the binding laws, you build upon a rock, and the floods of doubts,

doubts, and waves of ſcruples (though they beat vehemently) ſhould not ſhake you. But commonly our perſwaſion is grounded upon opinion only; I am of opinion that this is lawful and juſt; that this is according to the rule, which the Scripture gives; or that this is the meaning of ſuch a law, and therupon I am perſwaded to do this. As when the Scripture directs me in general, that all be done decently and in order, my opinion tels me that this is decent, and orderly; that, uncomely and diſorderly, and therupon I do that, and forbear this.

And ſeeing our perſwaſion in every particular action cannot be grounded upon faith, or knowledg, becauſe the Word of God, and binding laws, are too general, for particular directions in every caſe, therfore where they uphold not our perſwaſion, opinion muſt.

And, Sir, though your perſwaſion be ſomtimes grounded only upon an opinion, that you do according to the general directions in the Word of God, or in the Law, even then your perſwaſion may be ful, and your conſcience firm. Not ſuch a Plerophory, indeed, of perſwaſion, as when faith, or knowledg upheld it; yet

ſuch

such a firmness your opinion will bring, as is able to make your conscience firm and stable.

For where *they* guide us, there is such a certainty, that there is no *fear* at all of the *contrary*; what we *believe*, and *know*, cannot be *otherwise* then *so*: But where we have only *opinion* for our *guide*, there is alway, *Formido contrarii*, a secret *fear* that the *contrary way* may be the *right*, and not *this*.

Yet such a firmness there is alway in this conscience which is guided by opinion only, as truly to distinguish it from a doubtful conscience, and to advance *it*, above *that*: For a doubtful conscience wavers between this and that, halts (as the Prophet cals it) between one and another, gives no judgment, nor decision, that this or that is to be done; if once it determins, (though but upon opinion) this is no longer a doubting conscience.

Indeed, if the determination be faint and weak, this will go for an inclination to this, rather then to that, it is no absolute opinion of it; and so it is not yet beyond the bounds of doubting: but as soon as the opinion is fixed, the determination peremptory (as sentences and decisions of our

our judgment, and opinion uſe to be) then doubting is ſhut out of dores; And as this is a firm conſcience, ſo alſo (if the opinion be not erroneous) it is a good and a juſt conſcience.

Thus if you once ſettle, and fix your *opinion*, doubting is gone, the *indeterminate wavering* of *this* cannot conſiſt with the *determination*, and *reſolution* of *that*.

But then for ſcruples, they are not ſo eaſily excluded; they wil creep upon us concerning thoſe actions which are grounded upon faith, and knowledg, and therfore you cannot hope that thoſe actions, which are grounded upon opinion only, ſhould be free from them.

For ſcruples are ſaid to be, only probable arguments againſt our actions: now ſeeing whatſoever our actions are grounded upon (whether upon faith, or knowledg, or opinion) there may be arguments ſuggeſted (at leaſt as probable) againſt them, ſcruples therfore may conſiſt with the moſt firm conſcience.

And upon this, the difference wil be plain between *doubts* and *ſcruples:* Doubts do ſuſpend the judgment; no deciſion, on this, or that ſide, where doubting is; but ſcruples may conſiſt with that judgment

which opinion gives; yea, with that, which faith, or knowledg, give, as abſolute, and as firm, as they are: Scruples may come in, whatſoever we do, and trouble us, and ſhake us, and their deſign is to weaken, and diſhearten us too.

Examine then by this, whether yours be doubts, or ſcruples: If that ſentence which your faith, or knowledg, or opinion gave, concerning this, or that, to be done, or left undone, ſtands ſtil firm, as when you gave it firſt, unreverſed, it is not a doubt, which ariſeth in you, concerning this, or that; but a ſcruple only: a doubt reverſes the ſentence, already given, and ſuſpends from giving any other; this is only an argument, which, though it hath not reaſon enough, to prevail with you, for reverſing the ſentence and judgment, which directed you, in this or that action, yet it ſeems to have probability enough, to trouble, and diſquiet you, about it.

And when you have diſtinguiſhed, whether theſe motions which ariſe in you, be doubts, or ſcruples, you muſt do accordingly.

And it wil be material for you to obſerve what you imply in your Letter, That theſe motions ariſe in you, one while

while upon deliberation of what is to be done; and another while, upon re-examination of that which hath been done.

If they arise, before you do this, or that, the question then is, within your self, whether you ought to do, this, or that; or whether you are bound to do it, thus, or thus: and if these motions be then so impetuous upon you, as to cause you truly to doubt, whether that you are about be lawful, or unlawful, in that case you have an express direction from the Apostle, *Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin:* that is, whatsoever we do without a full perswasion, and opinion of the lawfulness of it, is sin.

When our conscience doubteth, and suspendeth to judg, or determine this, or that, we must suspend from doing this, or that, which it doubts of; He, who doth what He himself doth not determine, to be right and fit, but wavers, and doubts, whether it be so, or no, sinneth.

In which case of doubting of these two, doing, or not doing, it is as likely to do what is right, as what is not, there is one way to chuse the good, and but one way to chuse the evil; and yet I say not only, he may sin by taking the left hand,

but he does sin, though he lights upon the right: for though he doth that which is right, he doth it not rightly; he ventured blindfold upon it, without any guide of faith, knowledg, or opinion, doubtingly.

To prevent this certain sinning, by doing doubtingly, you must resolve your self fully of the lawfulness of all your actions before you undertake them, that you *condemn not your self, in that, which you allow your self*, to do. *Be fully perswaded in your own mind*, that you may do this, or that, *lawfully*, and then do it.

But then if these motions which arise in you, are found to be only scruples; you are fully perswaded in your own mind, that you ought to do this, or that, and yet objections crowd into your mind, to the contrary; in that case I must joyn with your ful perswasion, and put you forward to do that which it directs to do, and that with chearfulness, and speed: if you defer til these scruples be allayed, others may arise, and then you must stay to satisfie them also, and so it is too likely that you wil wholly neglect that duty: for scruples wil encrease and multiply so much the more, if they be heeded, and cherished.

Thus

Thus, if your motions be upon deliberation what is to be done: but now if they be upon re-examination, what hath bin done, and the queſtion is, whether this or that were wel done: in this caſe, you muſt recal to mind upon what grounds you did this, or that; whether faith, knowledg, or opinion directed you ſo to do: And of theſe, opinion is moſt likely to deceive you; yea, that only can miſlead you (for that is not faith, nor knowledg neither (but an opinion only that it is faith, or knowledg) which can direct you to do any thing that is amiſs.) And if it appear to you now, that the opinion which directed you then, was not true; you were fully perſwaded in your mind, but erroneouſly perſwaded; then your buſineſs wil be, to caſt off that error, to repent of it, and to repent alſo of that action into which your blind guide miſled you: And if the action were of that nature, as ſlander and injuſtice againſt our neighbour, you are bound alſo to repair your brother, in whatſoever he was damnified by it.

Thus you know many, who were once of that opinion (wherin ſome Proteſtants, and moſt Papiſts, agree) that it is lawful

to propagate the true Religion, by force and war, (and therupon engaged themſelves in ſpoiling and robbing, and ſlaying the diſſentient Party) who being now of another opinion, that to reform Religion by the ſword, is an offering violence to the tender conſciences of many, and a doing evil, that good may come of it, ſpend their time wholly in lamenting their former error and ſin; and their eſtates, in repairing ſuch men, whom in that their error, they had ſpoiled and injured.

Though the action was done upon a ful perſwaſion of the lawfulneſs of it, yet that perſwaſion appearing now erroneous, ſuch repentance, and reſtitution, they think required of them.

And in others, where theſe motions produce not a contrary opinion, yet doubts they may produce; and thus it may be with you: when you undertook this, or that action, you were fully perſwaded in your mind of the lawfulneſs of it; but now doubts ariſe in you concerning it; and you cannot determine whether you did lawfully, or unlawfully in it; in this caſe your labour wil be to reſolve your ſelf *de novo*, to ſtudy and conſult of the lawfulneſs of that action, as if you were

were now again to undertake it; and when your doubt is resolved into an opinion, you need litle direction in that case: If it be the same opinion again resumed, which guided you to that action, then you may bless God, and plead your innocency in that action, against all Objectors, and objections: If you are convinced by reason, and argument, to alter your opinion, then the former direction is to you in this case also.

And thus I meet with some, in every street, who took Oaths, and Covenants, upon the ful perswasion of the lawfulness of them, now so much doubting whether they did well, or ill, therin, that they consult their Books, and their spiritual Directors afresh, to be resolved concerning them: and when they alter their opinions (though their Oath cannot be unsworn, nor the actions, done in pursuance of it, un-done) yet I hope to see them so truly penitent, that these sins wil not be laid to their charge.

And thirdly, if these motions which arise in your mind, upon re-examination of what you have done, be scruples only; Arguments (or objections rather) suggested as probable, which do no way divert

you from your opinion which guided you in this, or that action; nor yet bring you into a true *doubt*, whether your *action* were *lawful* or *not*; in this Caſe, the more you neglect theſe ſcrupulous motions, the better and the ſooner you wil poſſeſs your ſoul in quietneſs and peace.

And now Sir, that you may be the better able to eject thoſe ſcruples you have already, and to prevent others alſo hereafter, you ſhal do wel; Firſt, truly to inform your ſelf of the cauſe, or original, whence they proceed.

In ſome they proceed from the temper of the body: a melancholick conſtitution, which is moſt ſubject to fears and ſadnes, if it hath a tender conſcience therwith, is commonly ful of theſe ſcruples alſo: In others they proceed from a ſceptical wit, which is alway enquiring, ſeldom ſatisfied; if that temper and this wit meet together with a tender conſcience, ſcruples wil abound: In others they may be from the Devil; he (by indiſpoſing our bodies, or raiſing fancies, or otherwiſe more immediatly by himſelf, without any advantage taken from us) caſts theſe ſcruples into our minds.

And from what cauſes ſoever theſe ſcruples

ſcruples proceed, they commonly come like Angels of light, with goodly ſhews, and holy language, moving to more exact obedience (as is pretended) and to more univerſal, and more punctual performances. And this they uſually urge ſo eagerly, that it is hard to diſtinguiſh them from thoſe motions of the holy Spirit, which I ſpake of even now: your examination of them therfore muſt be with ſom diligence: and if after that, you find thoſe motions & fervors in your mind, not to be from the holy Spirit, but ſcruples proceeding from one of theſe fountains, or from ſuch like;

Then ſecondly, you may conſider the many inconveniencies which they may bring upon you; how they weaken your mind, make it unſtable, as water; how they diſturb you in *many* performances, divert you from ſome; how inconſiſtent they are with that ſerenity of conſcience, and chearfulneſs of mind, which otherwiſe you might enjoy; how they darken your underſtanding, and make your wil and affections alſo dul and heavy in holy duties, and your whole life uncomfortable; how they lead into error and ſuperſtition oft-times, and may at length bring you into fear and perplexity;

plexity; yea (if the Devil can have his wil) even into deſperation it ſelf: when you reckon up theſe, and what other inconveniencies you find, or can fear from theſe ſcruples, you wil not delay to obſerve what you think fitteſt for your cure, or eaſe.

Therfore, thirdly, ſome directions I ſhal name: and I muſt begin with the chief; Humble and fervent praier to God, from whom alone you can receive comfort and quiet: then ghoſtly advice and direction from friends, praying God to direct your Director, and reſolving (if poſſible) to reſt ſatisfied in what he directs. Thirdly, divert, I pray, your ſelf from theſe ſcruples (as much as you can) caſt off the thoughts of them, foment them not by heeding them, nor by converſing frequently, with ſcrupulous perſons; yea, drive them away by croſs ſcruples, that is, propounding your more probable Arguments againſt thoſe leſs probable.

Or a fourth way may be, by adhering to thoſe opinions, which are moſt probable, moſt favorable, and moſt common, and by ordering our practiſes after them; rigid, and ſingular opinions open a wide dore

dore for ſcruples to enter in.

A fift: Conſider, I pray, in all your perplexities, the wonderful moderation of Chriſts commands; that he hath taken away the rigor of the law, and requires no more of us, then he enables us to perform: He expects not, from us, the performance of all things, in that manner, as they may be done by our utmoſt poſſible diligence and care, but accepts them at his throne of grace, if they be performed by our utmoſt moral diligence, and care: according to the ordinary courſe of humane diligence in other matters: therfore we ought not to be diſquieted, that we do not our utmoſt *poſſible* diligence, to obſerve his commands, for by ſuch ſcruples we ſhal be ſtacked and hindred in doing our utmoſt *moral* diligence.

A ſixt: To truſt in Gods mercies through Chriſt, that he wil give grace to enable us to what he requires, and pardon what is amiſs; He knows wherof we are made, how frail and weak we are, and wil have compaſſion of our infirmities.

Seventhly: to be truly ſenſible of our own natural corruption, that of our ſelves we are not able to think a good thought,

it

it muſt be the grace of God which enables us; and by that grace we are not enabled (in this our frail condition) to that exact performance which the rigor of the law requires; only to that ſincere and upright obedience, which God (through Chriſt) wil be pleaſed to accept. And though I hope no ſcruples ariſe in you, preſuming of your natural ſtrength, yet ſome may ariſe, not weighing the imperfection of our mortal condition, even in our regenerate ſtate: And if ſo, it wil be a good means towards the cure, that you learn to diſcern between your perſonal weakneſſes, and thoſe of our mortal condition, (which are common to all while they are in the fleſh) and charge your ſelf as culpable, and ſinful, only in thoſe *particular* defects, not in theſe *general* ones: It is an unhappineſs (not to be thought on without grief of heart) that we cannot now live (as in Paradiſe) exactly performing the wil of God always, in all things, with all our faculties; but I hope (if it be lamented) it wil not amount to a ſin at Chriſts throne of grace.

An eighth: rightly to underſtand that general rule of the Caſuiſts, *In dubiis tutior pars eligenda*, in doubtful matters to chuſe

chuſe the ſafeſt ſide; firſt, it muſt be in doubtful matters, where there is truly a doubt, not in ſcrupulous matters: Secondly, we are not alway bound to chuſe the ſafeſt, provided that what we chuſe, is ſafe: which is the ſafeſt wil be hard to reſolve in ſome caſes, and if you ſtay for that reſolution, ſcruples wil flow in. You do not ſin, if you chuſe that which is ſafe; and that is ſafe which (as I ſaid before) is grounded upon faith, knowledg, or opinion, ſo you be not deceived in them.

A ninth may be, by qualifying that ſtrict opinion, that we are alway bound to do that which is beſt; it is moſt true we are to aim at the faireſt, and beſt; and to preſs towards it; but if then we miſs it, and come ſhort of it, we ſin not; if that which you do be good, though it might have been better, lament the imperfection you ſhould, and yet praiſe God for the goodneſs of it.

A tenth may be, by conſidering that affirmative preceps lay not ſo ſtrict an obligation upon us, as negative precepts do: theſe *obligant ad ſemper*, (as Caſuiſts ſpeak) they not: for negative precepts are not broken, but by committing ſome act; affirmative by omitting only; and our obligation

ligation is not ſo ſtrict againſt omitting, as it is againſt committing. A caſe may happen wherin it may be lawful to omit the affirmative (as keeping the holy Feſtivals, and Faſts of the Church, *for God wil have mercy, and not ſacrifice*) though no caſe can poſſibly happen, wherin I may lawfully commit that which is againſt the negative; I cannot be excuſed if I take Gods name in vain, by Oaths and Covenants, though mercifulneſs towards my ſelf, wife, and children, (in ſaving my eſtate therby) plead for me: and ſo for other Negative precepts: therfore if the checks you hear within your ſelf be concerning Affirmatives, they may be the more ſuſpected for ſcruples, and ſooner anſwered, then if they be concerning Negatives.

Laſtly, ſeeing theſe ſcruples come to you with ſuch good words, and ſuch holy pretences, the beſt way to defeat them of their miſchievous purpoſes is, to take them at thoſe their good words, and go no further with them; Let thoſe words of theirs ſtir you up to a more univerſal and a more exact care, in the ſervice of God; thus you may make even theſe deceitful Gibeonites ſerviceable to the uſe of Gods Tabernacle. Thus,

Thus, becauſe the danger from theſe ſcruples may be great, therfore the directions to ſuppreſs and prevent, or to defeat them are many; and yet more you may ſuggeſt to your ſelf, or read in books of Devotion, and Caſuiſts: By ſome of theſe, or ſuch like, you may (I doubt not) obtain eaſe from your perplexities; and peace and comfort in your holy and juſt performances. And (as in the diſeaſes of your body, ſo in this of your ſoul) the ſooner you go about the cure, the better; it is eaſieſt at firſt; the more theſe ſcruples gain upon you, the more unſatisfiable they are, and there wil be the greater difficulty to caſt them out.

And here I muſt add a caution or two. Firſt, that you take very great heed, that you eject not the motions of the bleſſed Spirit, as if they were ſcruples; that you learn to diſtinguiſh between Thoſe, and Theſe: and whenſoever thoſe knock at the dore of your heart, open to them; whenſoever they call, or whiſper to you, ſay, *Speak Lord, for thy ſervant heareth.*

Secondly, that you beware of the common error of the world, which is, to account all ſtrict rules of Juſtice, or Temperance,

rance, Obedience to Parents; yea, and the punctual, preciſe ſervice of God, (though they be moſt abſolutely neceſſary) ſcruples and niceties: and deride the practiſers of ſuch rules, as ſcrupulous perſons.

And now at laſt in the cloſe of your Letter, you ſeem to grutch all time, which is not ſpent by you in holy duties and Praier, and you think fit to advance in them, as in other graces and virtues: Love, I ſee, is liberal, and where you love much, you wil ſtil be giving more.

And the more you encreaſe in love, the leſs wil that ſeem to be which you beſtow; that which is much now, wil ſeem leſs hereafter: And if you think fit your holy duties of Praier and Meditation ſhould advance ſtil, in proportion to your love; Remember withall that of *Jacob* (the mighty man of Praier) to drive no faſter, then the children and cattel (your weak body, *Jumentum animæ*, as the Fathers call it) are able to endure.

Now my Praier ſhal be, That all theſe ſhakings by doubts and ſcruples may tend to root you more deep, and more firm in

in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whose grace and mercy I commend you, and rest

Your servant in Christ Jesus.

A LETTER

CONTEINING

Many remarkable paſſages

In the moſt holy

LIFE & DEATH

OF THE LATE LADY,

LETICE,

Vi-Counteſs FALKLAND.

WRITTEN

To the Lady *Moriſon* at great *Tew* in Oxford-ſhire.

LONDON.
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M.DC.XL.VIII.

A LETTER,

Conteining many remarkable passages in the most holy Life *and* Death *of the late* Lady LETICE *Vi-Countess* Falkland.

Madame,

IT is the desire of some *Honorable Personages* to have an exact account of the *Death* of your most dear *Daughter*, the *Lady* FALKLAND; *they* being privy to much piety in *her life*, expect (as wel they may) somwhat most *remarkable* in *her sickness* and *death*.

And for the *comfort* of *you*, and for the *satisfaction* of *them*, I have gathered together some scattered particulars of *her life*, *sickness*, and *death*, and have sent them unto *you*.

That the most *precious perfume* of *her name*,

name, being *powred out* (*like S.* Mary Magdalens *box of Spiknard*) *may fil your*, and *their houſes*.

And though this *relation* of ſo many eminent *virtues* in *her*, would not (perhaps) have appeared ſo handſome from *your* own *pen* (becauſe ſo deep a ſhare of the praiſe belongs to *you*) yet you need not bluſh at the delivering of *it*; it may conſiſt with *your modeſty*, to be a *witneſs* of the truth of theſe particulars; though not to be a *publiſher* of them.

And if the *memory* of that moſt holy *Lady*, continue *precious* amongſt us; and *her* holy *example* efficacious with us; and *God* (who *ſanctified her* here, and now *glorifies her* in heaven) be magnified and honored for his *mercies* and *graces*, I have all I aim at.

I ſhal note ſomwhat remarkable in the very beginning of *her Chriſtian race*; more, in *her progreſs*, and *proficiency* in *it*; and then come to the laſt *ſtages*, when the *crown*, at the *end* of the *race*, was (as it were) within *her* ſight and view.

This *elect Lady* ſet out early in the ways of God, in the dawn or morning of her age: There was care taken while ſhe was young, that ſhe ſhould be brought up in the

the nurture and admonition of the Lord; She came not from her Nurſes arms without ſome knowledg of the principles of Chriſtian religion.

While ſhe was very young, her obedience to her Parents (which ſhe extended alſo to her Aunt, who had ſome charge over her, in her Fathers houſe) was very exact, and as ſhe began, ſo ſhe continued in this gratious, and awful temper of duty, and obſervance: I have heard you ſay (Madame) that you cannot remember any one particular, wherin at any time, ſhe diſobeyed her Father, or you.

That her time might not be miſ-ſpent, nor her employments tedious to her, the ſeveral howrs of the day had variety of employments aſſigned to them; and the intermixing of praier, reading, writing, working, and walking, brought a pleaſure to each of them, in their courſes; ſo that the day was carried about faſter then ſhe would, and ſhe begins in this her youth, to abridg her ſelf of her ſleep, and was oft-times at a book in her Cloſet, when ſhe was thought to be in bed.

You remember wel, I preſume, the Purſe her young fingers wrought for her own alms, and how importunately ſhe

would beg your ſingle mony to fil it; and as greedy ſhe was of employing it too; the poor ſeldome went from the houſe without the alms of the young daughter, as wel as of the Parents.

And how conſtant ſhe was then at her private Praiers, I gheſſe, by what I have heard from the keeper of your houſe; when ſtrangers were in her own room where ſhe ordinarily had her retirements, He was called to give her the key of ſome other chamber for that purpoſe, at her howr of Praier; ſhe would procure a new Oratory, rather then omit, or defer that duty.

And how powerful with God, the lifting up of her pure hands every where, in this her innocent Childhood was, ſoon appeared. For while her piety and holineſs was in this bud, a violent attempt there was made to blaſt it. About the thirteenth year of her age, there was a ſtorm of temptation raiſed in her, and ſome arguments the tempter had ſuggeſted to drive her to deſpair of Gods mercy towards her: And this I note the rather, becauſe it is not ordinary at ſuch years, to have attained to that growth, as to be thought fit for thoſe encounters:

But

But God upheld this young twig, againſt ſuch a ſtorm, which hath torn up many a fair tree: For after ſome anguiſh of ſpirit, and patience in the combate, and earneſt praiers, Gods grace was ſufficient for her: and ſurely it was not the *ſtrength* of her hands, at this age, but the *pureneſs* of them, which prevailed for her.

Some there are, whom God leads from the ſpiritual *Ægypt*, to *Canaan*, not by this way of the Philiſtims, leſt they ſhould repent when they ſee war, and turn back again into *Ægypt*, *Exod.* 13. 17. But her (it ſeems) God trained up in this military courſe; and from her youth exerciſed her in it, that ſhe might be expert at it.

After this conqueſt, her ſoul enjoyed much peace and tranquillity, and ſhe went on moſt cheerfully in holy duties, and taſted much comfort, and delight in them: And her heart was ever and anon ſo ful, that out of the abundance of it, ſhe would ſay, *Oh what an incomparable ſweetneſs there is in the muſick upon* Davids *Harp*; *oh, what heavenly joy there is in thoſe Pſalms, and in praiers, and praiſes to God*; *how amiable are the courts of Gods houſe*; *how welcome the days of his ſolemn worſhip!*

And now nothing can hinder her from

thoſe holy Aſſemblies; Every *Lords day* conſtantly, forenoon, and afternoon, ſhe would be with the earlieſt at them: Some while (when ſhe wanted a convenience of riding) ſhe walked cheerfully three or fowr miles a day, as young, and as weak, as ſhe was, to them: And at night ſhe accounted the joys, and the refreſhments, which her ſoul had been partaker of, a ſufficient recompence, for the extream wearineſs of her body.

And within a ſhort while, by reading good Authors, and by frequent converſe with learned men, ſhe improves (by Gods help) her natural talents of underſtanding, and reaſon, to a great degree of wiſdom and knowledg.

And now theſe riches, of her piety, wiſdom, quickneſs of wit, diſcretion, judgment, ſobriety, and gravity of behavior, being once perceived by Sir *Lucius Cary*, ſeemed portion enough to him: Theſe were they, he priſed above worldly Inheritances, and thoſe other fading acceſſions, which moſt men court.

And being married to him, riches and honor, and all other worldly proſperity, flow in upon her; and conſequently to proceed in holineſs and godlineſs grows

an harder task, then before it ſeemed to be: it being much more difficult *when riches* and *honor* thus *increaſe*, then, *not* to *ſet her heart upon them.*

Yet God enabled her by his grace for this alſo; for when poſſeſſion was given her of ſtately palaces, pleaſantly ſeated, and moſt curiouſly and fully furniſhed, and of revenues and royalties anſwerable, though your Ladyſhip hath heard her acknowledg Gods great goodneſs towards her, for theſe temporal preferments, yet neither you, nor any of her friends, could perceive her heart, any whit exalted, with joy for them.

They were of the Babylonians retinew, who when they had ſeen *Hezekiahs* riches and treaſures, ſet their heart upon them, *Iſai.* 39. this true Iſraelite reſerved her affections, for thoſe riches which never fade, and for thoſe dwellings, which are above, where the City is of pure gold, and the walls garniſhed with pretious ſtones.

This confluence of all worldly felicities and contentments, did ſo litle affect her, that there were ſome ſeemed diſpleaſed at it; & then ſhe would attribute much of it, to a melancholick diſeaſe, which was

then upon her; And though I deny not, but that ſome worldly delights might fall by the hand of her melancholy, yet doubtleſs where the diſeaſe ſlew its hundreds, grace ſlew its ten thouſands.

And in this condition ſome years paſſed, during which time, ſhe was moſt conſtant at Praiers, and Sermons, and frequently received the bleſſed Sacrament; and although now, and then, ſhe felt not her wonted ſpiritual comforts, but in ſtead of them had ſome anguiſh, and bitternes of ſpirit, yet by the advice of good Divines, and by her ordinary help of praier, ſhe recovered ſoon her peace and joy.

Thus in ſeveral conditions, of youth, and ripe years, of virginity, and marriage; and amongſt contrary temptations, of adverſity, and proſperity; affliction, and comfort, ſhe continues that courſe of holy life, which ſhe had begun; a great proficiency, and a far progreſs this: yet I crave leave to reckon it all into her beginning, for this was but ſlow in reſpect of that great agility, and quick ſpeed, ſhe attained unto, in the other part of her ſpiritual race.

Her proficiency and progreſs I ſhal account

count from that time, when her proſperity began to abate; when her dear Lord, and moſt beloved Husband, that he might be like *Zebulon*, (a ſtudent helping the Lord againſt the mighty, *Judg.* 5. 14.) went from his Library to the Camp; from his Book and Pen, to his Sword and Spear; and the conſequent of that, an inevitable neceſſity, that ſhe muſt now be divorced from him, for a while, whom ſhe loved more then all the things of this world; this was a ſad beginning: but that total divorce, which, ſoon after, death made between him, and her; that he ſhould be taken away, by an untimely death, and by a violent death too, this, this was a moſt ſore affliction to her; the ſame ſword which killed him pierced her heart alſo.

And this heavy affliction which God ſent upon her, ſhe interpreted for a loud call from heaven, to a further proficiency in piety and virtue.

And yet ſhe fears it may be a puniſhment alſo upon her, for ſome ſin, or other, and therfore ſtrictly examines her ſelf, and ranſacks every corner of her heart, to find out wherin ſhe had provoked God to lay this great affliction on her; and to make ſure, ſhe renues her repentance for

all her tranſgreſſions; and her godly ſorrow for her ſins paſt, is as freſh, as if it had bin for the ſins of yeſterday.

And now ſhe addreſſes her ſelf to a Divine of great eminency for piety, and learning; and from him ſhe takes directions for a more ſtrict courſe of life in this her Widowhood, then formerly; now ſhe forgetting quite what was behind, preſſes forward to what was before, and, as if ſhe had done nothing yet, ſhe begins anew.

And though the greateſt and chiefeſt part of her Chriſtian work, was locked up cloſe within her ſelf, and ſome of it very ſtudiouſly, and induſtriouſly concealed by her, (that ſhe might be ſure no degree of vain glory, ſhould creep upon her with it) yet much of it appeared, by the effects, and is now forced to come abroad before us.

Her firſt and grand employment was to read and underſtand, and then (to the utmoſt of her ſtrength) to practiſe our moſt bleſſed Saviors Sermon upon the Mount, in the fift, ſixt, and ſeventh Chapters of S. *Matthew's* Goſpel; and having read over a moſt compleat (though compendious Comment) upon that Sermon,

ſhe

ſhe ſet forthwith, upon the work of practiſing it, and began with thoſe virtues, to which the beatitudes are annexed.

And her mercifulnes was none of thoſe virtues, which ſhe could at all conceal from us; much of her eſtate (we ſaw) given yearly to thoſe of her Kindred, which were capable of it, from her: And ſome of her neer neighbours, who were very old, and not able to work; or very young, and not fit for work, were wholy manteined by her: To other poor children ſhe contributed much, both for their ſpiritual, and their temporal wel-being; by erecting a Schole for them, where they were to be taught both to read, and to work: much care ſhe took, that no man, or woman, or child ſhould want employment; that their own hands might bring them in a competent ſubſiſtence; and accounted that the beſt contrivement of her eſtate, which ſet moſt poor people on work; for if it were to their profit, ſhe litle regarded her own detriment in it.

So that her principal care herein, was to keep them from Idleneſs (*that root of all ſin and wickedneſs*) for by another contrivement of her eſtate, ſhe might have received more profit, and therby have

bin better able, to releive them, though by this only, ſhe was able to ſet them on work.

A moſt eminent piece of mercifulneſs this, where corporal and ſpiritual mercy went together, and wiſdom guided both.

And for the poor at home, and for ſtrangers at the dore, ſhe was charitable in feeding the hungry, and refreſhing the faint, and weak; and for cloathing the naked, in ſome extremities you ſhould ſee this Lady her ſelf, go up and down the houſe, and beg garments from her Servants backs (whom ſhe requited ſoon after with new) that the poor might not go naked, or cold from her dore: So that ſhe was not only a liberal Almoner to the poor, but alſo an earneſt Solicitor for them: And when it was objected, that many idle and wicked people, were by this courſe of charity, relieved at her houſe, her anſwer was; *I know not their hearts, and in their outward carriage and ſpeech, they all appear to me good and virtuous; and I had rather releive five unworthy Vagrants, then that one member of Chriſt ſhould go empty away*; And for harboring ſtrangers, the many inconveniencies, ordinarily enſuing upon it, could

not

not deter her from it; ſomtimes for ſome weeks together, they were entertained by her.

And ſince her death, I hear of plentiful relief, here, at *London*, and at *Oxford*, ſent privately to Priſons, and needy perſons, with a ſtrict charge that it ſhould not be known from whence it came; *She would not have her left hand know, what her right hand gave.*

And this her mercifulneſs could not be bounded within the limits of friends, it extended it ſelf to her enemies too: when there were ſome ſtore of them taken Priſoners by the Kings Soldiers, and in great need, ſhe conſulted how ſhe might ſend releif to them: and when it was anſwered, that ſuch an act would raiſe jealouſies (in ſome) of her loyalty to His Majeſty, ſhe replied, *No man wil ſuſpect my loyalty, becauſe I releive theſe Priſoners, but he would ſuſpect my Chriſtianity, if he ſhould ſee me releive a needy Turk, or Jew: however I had rather he ſo miſunderſtood, (if this my ſecret Alms ſhould be known) then that any of mine enemies (the worſt of them) ſhould periſh for want of it.*

And this one inſtance, and reaſon of hers is ground enough to believe, ſhe faileđ

led not to releive her enemies, as often as occaſion required.

But beyond all, her mercifulneſs towards the ſick, was moſt laudable: her proviſion of *Antidotes* againſt *infection*, and of *Cordials*, and other ſeveral ſorts of *Phyſick* for ſuch of her neighbors as ſhould need them, amounted yearly to very conſiderable ſums: And though in diſtributing ſuch *medicinal proviſions*, her *hand* was very *open*, yet it was cloſe enough in applying them, her skil (indeed) was more then ordinary, and her warineſs too.

When any of the poor neighbors were ſick, ſhe had a conſtant care, that they ſhould neither want ſuch releif, nor ſuch attendance, as their weak condition called for, and if (need were) ſhe *hired Nurſes* to ſerve them: And her own frequent *viſiting* of the pooreſt *Cottagers*, and *her* ready *ſervice* to them, on their *ſick bed*, argued as great *humility*, as *mercifulneſs* in her; yet the Books of *ſpiritual exhortations* ſhe carried in her hand to *theſe ſick perſons*, declared a further deſign ſhe had therin, of promoting them towards *heaven*, by reading to them, and by adminiſtring words *of holy counſel* to them: There

is no *ſeaſon* more *fit* (ſhe would ſay) for *ſowing* good *ſeed*, then this, while the *ground* of their *hearts* is *ſoftned*, and *melting* with *ſorrow* and *ſickneſs*; And to gain this advantage it was, that ſhe was ſo frequent a *Viſitor* of the ſick, going day after day to their *bed-ſide*: ſhe hath bin obſerved ſitting in a Cottage, wayting the *ſick womans* leiſure, til the *ſlumbers* and *fits* were over, that ſhe might read again to her, and finiſh the work ſhe had begun.

And of late when ſhe could not do this good office, *in her own perſon* (ſhe growing ſickly and weak) yet ſhe would do it ſtil *by proxie*: for ſome of her friends or ſervants were deputed by her, to go to the ſick, with her Books too, daily; and now and then moſt of her family (who were fit for ſuch an imployment) were ſent abroad on this errant.

Thus ordinarily in all her works of *corporal mercy*, ſhe added *works of ſpiritual mercy*, too; relieving the wants of the *body*, and of the *ſoul* together, inſtructing, and exhorting, and earneſtly perſwading the poor and the ſick to ſome virtue or other, for their ſouls health.

Herein following the *command* in this *Sermon*, and alſo the *example* of the *Preacher*,

cher, our moſt bleſſed Savior: who, when he *cured* the *diſeaſes* of the *body*, *cured* the *diſeaſes* of that infirm *ſoul* too; and at the ſame time with one word, adminiſtred to the ſick and impotent, *both health and grace:* our Saviors *practice* is the *gloſs* upon his own *Text*; And this *handmayd of his*, was for the *text*, and this *gloſs* too of *mercifulneſs*.

And as for this, ſo for *meekneſs* alſo, ſhe was moſt eminent: ſhe was *ſecond* to none of her *Sex*, and *age* (I believe) among us, *for perſpicacity of underſtanding*, & clearneſs of *judgment*; yet as far from *ſelf-conceit*, as from *ignorance:* her wont indeed was upon debates, to object til all arguments, ſhe could think on to the contrary, were ſatisfied; and when that was once done, no cavil was heard, but her aſſent readily given; and this ready ſubmiſſion of her judgment, to the beſt reaſons, I mention, for the *meekneſs* of her *underſtanding:* herein this *Lady* excelled ſome of the chiefeſt *Rabbies*, that her *knowledg did not puff up, but edifie*.

And her *underſtanding* leading the way in meekneſs, her *wil* chearfully followed in *it* too; aſſoon as her *underſtanding* was ſatisfied her *wil* bowed preſently and obeyed;

beyed; ſhe ſeldom denied to do, what ſhe was convinced was fit to be done.

The greater difficulty was with her *affections*: her natural *temper* ſhe would oft complain inclined her to *anger*; and being ſo wel aware of it, ſhe moſt diligently obſerved her ſelf, and did in a great degree conquer that *froward inclination*: and that good meaſure of *meekneſs* (in this kind) which ſhe attained unto, was the more commendable, becauſe of the many great difficulties ſhe met with in it.

Then for *peaceablenes: as much as in her lay, and as far as was poſſible, ſhe had peace with all men*; ſhe *ſuffered* her *ſelf* to be *defrauded*, and damaged in her eſtate, rather then ſhe would diſquiet a debtor, by ſuits at law; for peace is *æquivalent* (ſaid ſhe) to the *ſum* deteined.

And in other differences, where ſhe was not a party in law, her *Chriſtianity* engaged her to wiſh, and endevour for reconciliation amongſt *brethren*; but eſpecially, when *controverſies* aroſe between *neighbors, and pariſhioners*, ſhe made uſe of all her power, and art, to *reconcile* them.

And ſhe had her *antidotes* here too, as wel as her *medicines*; to prevent *contentions*, as wel as to cure them; It coſt her

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a good ſum, your Ladyſhip knows, a while ſince to prevent a *contention*, ſhe foreſaw ariſing among the *neighbors*, about the choice of a *Pariſh Officer*: ſhe *hired one*, and all was *peaceable and quiet*.

Thus ſhe hungred and thirſted after peace, and *after righteouſneſs* too; as *the chaſed*, *wearied*, and *faint hart* after the *water brooks*, ſo her *ſoul* ſeemed to *long after righteouſneſs*; frequently *panting*, *Oh why am I not? oh how ſhal I be? oh when ſhal I be perfect, as my heavenly Father is perfect?*

And for *patient ſuffering*. Of late ſhe was ſeldom free from this, or that trouble: *ſpiritual afflictions*, and *ſorrows*, or *bodily infirmities*, of *weaknes* and *ſickneſs*, or *worldly loſſes*, in her eſtate, one, or more of theſe, or ſuch like preſſures were conſtantly heavy upon her; yet litle diſturbance, no *impatience* at all could be perceived in her; I have ſeen them upon her together, and yet her *patience* triumphing over them all.

There were who thought her in love with ſuffering, when ſhe refuſed to pay *contribution mony* againſt the *King*, and ſuffered her *ſtock of great value* to be ſeized on, rather then to pay ſome *litle tax*,

which was demanded: This (I ſay) was thought much; had not *carrying* the *Croſs*, when it is inevitably layd on, bin enough? but thus to *meet* the *Croſs*, and *take it up*, thus forwardly to ſuffer damage, rather then *blemiſh* her *obedience* and *loyalty*, this was her practice; and therfore til the *King* himſelf granted an indulgence, ſhe patiently ſuffered whatſoever damage came upon her, ſtil refuſing to pay *contribution* to the *neighboring Garriſons*.

And now after the exerciſe of all theſe virtues in this high degree, ſuch a Bounty of ſpirit was apparent in her, as was moſt admirable: upon all occaſions *bewailing* her *weakneſſes*, and *lamenting* her *ſpiritual wants*: There were ſome about her, who had an holy emulation to be like her, in theſe, and ſuch like *graces* and *virtues*, and ſhe hath now and then overheard them, wiſhing, that they were as forward as ſhe: and her conſtant reply was, *Oh ye are not ſo backward! yet wiſh your ſelves better*; ye *know not how vile and corrupt my heart is*: So that in ſome reſpects ſhe accounted *her ſelf the greateſt of ſinners*; in no reſpect would ſhe eſteem better of her ſelf, *then of the leaſt of Saints*; a wel-wiſher towards *holines*, and a *beginner ſtil*.

Thus

Thus ſhe daily practiſed theſe *graces* and *virtues*, to which our Savior annexeth ſuch ſpecial *bleſſings*; and ſtudied to be ſtil more and more perfect in them, with as much diligence, as the *Scholar* doth his *leſſon*, and with as much *ſucceſs*, and good *ſpeed* too.

And from this Sermon of our *bleſſed Savior*, ſhe learned that duty of Praier; and her chief practiſe therin, ſhe could not conceal from us neither, which was, as follows.

Firſt, ſhe ſpent ſome howrs every day in her *private devotions*, and *meditations*; and theſe were called, (I remember) by thoſe of her *family*, her *buſy howrs*; *praiers*, her *buſineſs*; *Martha's employment*, was her *recreation*, ſhe had ſpare howrs for it; *Maries*, was her *buſineſs*.

Then her Maids came into her *Chamber* early every morning, and ordinarily ſhe paſſed about an howr with them; In *praying*, and *catechiſing*, and *inſtructing* them; To theſe *ſecret* and *private praiers*, the *publick Morning* and *Evening* praiers of the Church, before *dinner* and *ſupper*; and another *form*, together with reading *Scripture*, and ſinging *Pſalms*, before *bed time*, were daily and conſtantly added.

And

And ſo ſtrict was ſhe for the obſerving of theſe ſeveral *howrs* of *praier*, that a charge was given her ſervants to be frequent, (if their occaſions permitted) at every of them: However ſhe would not endure that any one ſhould be, one day, abſent from them all; If ſhe obſerved any ſuch, ſhe preſently ſent for them, into her chamber; and *conſecrated another howr of praier*, there, purpoſely for them.

To *pray* with *David*, ſeven times a day, or with *Daniel three times*, is expected perhaps only from ſuch *perſons*, as have *leiſure* and *opportunity*: but with *Levi* to offer up *Morning* and *Evening ſacrifice*, *every day*, this ſhe required from the buſieſt ſervant in the houſe, that at the *outgoings* of the *Morning* and *Evening*, every one ſhould *praiſe God* and call *upon his name*.

Neither were theſe *holy offices* appropriate to her *menial ſervants*, others came freely to joyn with them, and her *Oratory* was as open to the neighbors, as her *Hall* was.

On the *Lords day* ſhe roſe in the Morning, earlier then ordinarily; yet enjoyned her ſelf ſo much *private duty*, with her *children* and *ſervants*, (examining them in the

the Sermons, and Catechiſings &c.) and with her own *ſoul*, that often times the *day* was *too ſhort* for her; and then I have known her *riſe* two or three howrs *before* day, on the Monday, to ſupply what was left *undone*, the day before.

To diſpoſe her ſelf the better for the religious keeping of the *Lords day*, (as wel as for other *ſpiritual* ends) I preſume it was, that ſhe ſo ſolemnly *faſted* every *Saturday*; that day ſhe ſequeſtred her ſelf from company, and from worldly employment, and came ſeldom out of her *Cloſet*, til towards *evening*, and then the *Chaplain* muſt *double* the *ſacrifice*; *praiers* ſhe had and *Catechiſing* both.

And the other *Holy days* of the *Church*, ſhe punctually obſerved: and when the publick duties were performed by the Congregation, on *thoſe days*, ſhe releaſed her ſervants to their *recreations*, and to their particular *occaſions*; ſaying, *Theſe days are yours, and as due to you, as ordinary days to my imployments*; and I wil not be unjuſt to encroach upon your ſeverals, by expecting any work from you.

And on theſe *Holy days* ſhe rejoiced much, at the advantage ſhe gained, of going to her poor *unlearned neighbors* with her

her *Book*; now their *plow* and their *wheel* (ſaid ſhe) *ſtands ſtil*: and they are at good leiſure, to hear ſome good *leſſons* read to them.

And her ſtrictneſs was exemplary in keeping the *Faſts* of the *Church*, and ſuch days as were appointed for *ſolemn humiliation*: *young* and *old*, *noble*, and *mean*, *free* and *bond*, in her family, muſt obſerve them duly; the *Ninivites* were her *patern*, both for *outward* and *inward humiliation*.

And ſince our calamities increaſed upon us, ſhe often wiſhed, that *lawful authority* could *vote* it fit, that not only the *ſecond Fridays*, but alſo the *laſt Wedneſdays* in every Moneth, ſhould be kept ſolemnly throughout the land; that our Faſts were doubled, as wel as our troubles.

And her care to prepare her ſelf for the receiving of the *holy Sacrament*, of *our* moſt *bleſſed Lords Supper*, was moſt commendable, and moſt punctual: oftentimes *ſcruples* and *fears* aroſe in her, tending to keep her back from that *heavenly banquet*; and ſhe (having, upon examination of them, reaſon enough, (as we thought) to conclude, that they were *temptations* from the *Devil*, whom ſhe perceived labouring a main, to deprive her of that *ſtrength* and *comfort*,

comfort, which ſhe hoped to receive from that *ſacred ordinance*) neglected them all, and preſented her ſelf with an *humble* and *trembling heart* at that *bleſſed Sacrament*; and theſe fears and ſcruples in *her*, occaſioned this *peremptory reſolution* from *her*, that ſhe would not (*by Gods help*) thenceforth *omit* any *opportunity* of *communicating*: Thus while the Devil is *undermining* to *weaken* her, ſhe is *countermining* to *ſtrengthen her ſelf* more, againſt him; which *reſolution* ſhe conſtantly kept at home, and (I am told) at *Oxford*, and *London* too; The firſt inquiry almoſt after her journey thither, was, where, and when is there a *Communion*; and ſometimes ſhe would go to the other end of the *City* for it.

At home her Servants were all moved to accompany her to the Sacrament, and they who were prevailed with gave up their names to her, two or three days before; and from thence, ſhe applied her ſelf to the inſtructing of them; and ſhe knew wel, how to adminiſter to every one their particular portion; and ſeveral exhortations ſhe had for ſeveral perſons ſhe had power over.

Yet ſhe truſted not in her own inſtructions

ctions of them, but desired the Chaplains help also to *examine* them, and to *instruct* them farther; and her care was so to order her *domestical occasions*, that all those Servants, who were to *receive* the *Sacrament*, should have the *day before it* free from their *ordinary work*, that they might have better leisure for that *spiritual work* of *preparing themselves for that Sacrament*.

And after the holy Sacrament, she called them together again, and gave them such exhortations as were proper for them.

And this very care and *piety* in *family duties*, was so highly esteemed of in *Abraham*, that *God* made him one of his privy counsel (as I may so say) for that alone, *Gen.*18. 17. And might not the singular *wisdom* and *deep knowledg* of *divine counsels*, and *heavenly* mysteries, which this *daughter* of *Abraham* had, be a reward of that care to instruct her *children*, and *household* in the *ways* of *God*?

Yet while she is thus religiously and piously imployed in this *good proficiency*, and far *progress*, going on from *grace* to *grace*, from *virtue* to *virtue*; God hath a further *designe* upon her, another *affliction*

to

to *quicken* her yet more.

Her young and moſt dear ſon *Lorenzo* (whom God had endowed with the *choiceſt* of *natural abilities*, and to whom her *affections* were moſt *tender*, by reaſon of thoſe fair *bloſſoms* of *piety*, ſhe perceived in him) God takes away from *her*.

This, added to her former *troubles*, of the loſs of her *Huſband*, of her croſſes in the *world*, and of her *ſpiritual afflictions* (which came often upon her) makes the burthen moſt heavy; ſhe was bruiſed with *afflictions* before, but now ſhe fears *being ground to powder*.

Now ſhe *weeps* and *mourns* all *the day long*, *and at night* alſo *waters her couch with tears*; and *weeping, ſaith, ah! this immoderate ſorrow muſt be repented of, theſe tears wept over again*: and this quick ſenſe of diſpleaſing *God* by this deep grief ſoon allayed the vehemency of it. And now ſhe retires her ſelf to *liſten what the Lord God ſaid unto her*, in this louder *call* of *affliction*; and ſhe ſeems to be *prompted*, that ſhe was not yet *weaned* enough from the *things of this world*, and that it is expedient for her, that ſome of thoſe worldly *comforts* ſhe moſt *delighted in*, ſhould be taken away from her, that her *converſa-*

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tion may be yet more *ſpiritual*, and *heavenly*, and therfore this *affliction* ſeemed to call her to a greater *mortification* to the *world*, and to a nearer *conformation* to *Chriſt her Lord.*

Yet ſtil her ſorrow for her *ſon* is ſomwhat exorbitant, ſhe fears, and therfore ſhe goes to her ghoſtly *Phyſitian* again, and acquaints him with the violence of thoſe *fits* of *ſorrow*, which of late had ſeized upon her, for the *death of her Son*; and he with his *medicinal counſel* and direction, by Gods help, *cured* this her *diſtemper*; and *antidotes* he preſcribed too, to *prevent* a *relaps* into this malady of *exceſſive grief.*

Now ſhe confeſſes that this *very affliction* was moſt *fit* for her, and that it would prove moſt behoofful to her, and therfore ſhe labors to put on *joy* in ſtead of *ſorrow*, and *comfort* in ſtead of *mourning*, and returning home with perfect cheerfulneſs, every one there obſerved a moſt notable, though ſodain change in her; ſad *Hannah's countenance* and *converſation* not more viſibly *changed* upon the good words of *Eli* the *Prophet*, to *her*, concerning the *Samuel* ſhe ſhould *obtain*, then hers now is, after the *loſs* of *one*.

Thus *God* made the *medicine* moſt *ſovereign* to her, and the *antidote* too; for I verily believe ſhe never after felt any *fit* of that her *diſeaſe*; and though ſhe wept often for her *tears* ſo profuſely ſpent formerly upon her Sons *hearſe*, yet after this, not a tear more ſhed over it.

And with this extraordinary *chearfulnes* ſhe takes up a moſt firm *reſolution* of a further *progreſs* in *holines* and *piety*, and addreſſes her ſelf to run theſe *later ſtages of her Chriſtian race*, with greater ſpeed, then ſhe had ſhewed in any of the former: and therupon ſhe begins with a moſt diligent endevour to conform *her life exactly*, and *univerſally* to the moſt *holy wil of God*.

But the *Devil*, who before envied her *beginning*, and her *proficiency* much more, is now moſt *violent* to hinder her *perfection*; and therfore upon this her renued purpoſe of more *exact obedience*, preſently *aſſaults* her with *fierceneſs* and rage, ſtrongly *tempting* her, to think that ſhe had *deceived her ſelf* all this while, and that ſhe had mocked God with a *counterfeit repentance*, which was no way *acceptable to him*.

And an *argument* was brought to this purpoſe,

purpoſe, which was ſo fully ſutable to the *readines* of her own *ſpirit*, that it is hard to ſay, whence it proceeded.

And this it was; my *grief* for *my ſins* hath not been ſo *vehement*, as that, the other day, *for the death of my Son*; I *wept* not ſo *bitterly* for *them*, as *I did for that*; and therfore that my *repentance* is not *acceptable*; you may read the argument further preſſed againſt her ſelf, in the Letters annexed.

And in this *anguiſh* of *ſpirit*, ſhe haſtens to her learned friend again, and begs *counſel* and *direction from him*, and after devout *praiers* and holy *conference*, received ful *comfort* and *thorow ſatisfaction*, and returns home now as *viſibly lifted* up from the *deep pit* of *anguiſh*, and *diſquiet of ſpirit*, as ſhe was the other day, from the *valley* of *ſorrow*: and with *tranquillity* of *mind* and *joy* of *heart*, ſhews to her friends, both how ſhe ſunk, and how ſhe was raiſed again, as you may read further in the annexed Letters.

And now having *by the help of her God leapt over this wall*, and overcome this difficulty, with much *cheerfulnes of ſpirit*, ſhe enters upon the practiſe of what ſhe had laſt reſolved on. This *oppoſition* though it

ſtaied her awhile, yet *ſet* an *edge* upon her *reſolution*, and ſhe ſoon *recovered* that whetting time. And ſhe begins by a moſt ſharp *mortification*, to obey the call of her laſt *affliction*.

The vanity of *apparel* and *dreſſes* ſhe had *cut off* long before; and after *her Huſbands death*, the *richnes* of them, too. Theſe (and *her looking glaſſes with the Women in the law*) ſhe had laid by, for the *ſervice* of the *Tabernacle*; what ſhe ſpared in theſe, ſhe beſtowed upon the poor *members* of *Chriſt*, and now ſhe begins to cut off *all worldly pomp* alſo.

In her *houſe*, in her *retinue*, and at her *table*, and otherwiſe, ſhe denies her ſelf *ſtate* (which her quality might have excuſed) that (with *Dorcas* the *Widow*) ſhe might be *ful of good works*; and more *delight* ſhe takes to ſee her *revenues* now ſpent among a crowd of *Almes-men* and *women* at her *dore*, then by a *throng* of *Servants* in her *houſe*; it was a greater *joy* to *her*, that ſhe could mantain *poor children* at their *Books*, and their *work* then to have *bags and Gentle-women* for her *Attendents*: *Theſe expenſes* ſhe knew would be better allowed, in her *Bil* of *accounts*, at the *general audit*, then thoſe other; it was her

pomp

pomp and *joy* to *mortifie all worldly pomp*, and all *carnal delight*.

And now her anger too (which was *cruſhed* before) muſt be wholy *ſubdued*; and to that purpoſe ſhe ſolicitouſly avoids *all enquiries*; and all *diſcourſe* which ſhe feared would provoke her to *immoderate anger*; and when ſhe feels it ſtrugling to ariſe in her, then preſently (either by ſilence, or by diverting to another matter) ſhe labors to ſtifle it.

And while ſhe is ſuppreſſing the ſinfulneſs of this paſſion, ſhe undertakes alſo, that moſt difficult task of *taming* the *tongue*: And as it is neceſſary with *unruly beaſts*, ſhe begins *roughly* with it, ties it up, with a moſt ſtrong *reſolution*, and ſcarce ſuffers *it to ſpeak*, leſt ſhe ſhould *offend with her tongue*: thus for ſome while, it was *ſtreightned*, and then ſhe *looſed* it a litle with theſe two cautions.

Firſt, that it ſhould never ſpeak evil of any man, though *truly*, but only upon a *deſign of charity*, to reclaim him from that evil: And becauſe it is not ordinary to reclaim any vitious perſon, in his *abſence*, therfore her charge is peremptory to her *tongue*, That it never ſhould *ſpeak evil of any man*, were he moſt notoriouſly vici-

ous, if he were *abſent* and *not like* to *be amended by it*: A ſtrict rule this, yet verily I perſwade my ſelf, that for a long time before her *death*, ſhe moſt punctually obſerved it; ſhe accounted it a crime to *ſpeak evil falſly* of any man; and it went for a *ſlander* with her (as wel it might) to *ſpeak evil truly* of any one, unleſs it were in *love*.

The ſecond caution her tongue had, that, as much as was poſſible, it ſhould *keep* in every *idle word*, and ſpeak out only that which was to *edification*.

The *Theſſalonians* were famous for ſpeaking to the *edification* one of another, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 11. and this *Theſſalonian language our good Lady* ſtudied, with as much diligence and earneſtneſs, as we ordinarily ſtudy a *deep ſcience*, or a *gainful myſtery*: and now ſhe is very *ſlow to ſpeak* (as the Apoſtle exhorts) and, where ſhe cannot rule the diſcourſe to *edification*, ſhe ſits ſilent, *and refrains even from good words, though it be pain and grief to her*.

And of late ſhe diſtinguiſht between *civil*, and *ſpiritual edification*, and ſcarcely allowed her ſelf *diſcourſes* for *civil edification* of her friends, or neighbors in worldly matters: *Spiritual edification* in *heavenly*

venly things was all her aim.

And her *care* was the ſame in *writing*, as in *ſpeaking*; not a vain, not an *idle word* muſt ſlip from her *pen*; ſhe thought not her *ſoul clean*, if there were ſuch a *blot* in her *paper*. In her *Letters*, no ſavour of complement at all, and ſhe judged her ſelf guilty of a *treſpas*, if ſhe ſubſcribed her ſelf, *Your ſervant*, to whom ſhe was not really *ſo*.

And for that other *temperance* in *diet*, as wel as in *ſpeech*, ſhe was very eminent. A *ſmal doſis* of *meat or drink*, and of ſleep, and eaſe, ſufficed her.

In *faſtings often*, in *watching often*; and *temperate* ſhe was, in an high degree continually. And theſe were ſure means for the *mortification* of her *appetites*: and as far from *daintineſs* as from *intemperance*, and both that, and this, not only in a *care* of her *health*, and in reſpect of *Gods commandement*, but alſo out of a *conſcientiouſneſs* (as ſhe would now & then intimate) that ſhe was unworthy to enjoy any thing, for *quantity* or *quality* above the *meaneſt* in the *Pariſh*.

And together with theſe *mortifications* of her *affections* to *honor* and *ſtate*; and of her *appetites*; ſhe now alſo ſeverely un-

dertakes the *mortification* of her *natural affection* to her *children* and *friends*, and keeps that from its wonted exorbitancy: It ſounded very harſhly, to ſome of her deareſt friends, when ſhe ſaid, *Oh love me not I pray too much!* until ſhe added, *and God grant, I never love my friends too much hereafter*, that hath *coſt me dear, and my heart hath ſmarted ſore with grief for it already*: And now her wil and underſtanding muſt be henceforth more *mortified* then formerly; ſhe had reſigned them before to *Gods wil*, and ſhe renues that *reſignation* daily, and moſt freely ſubmits her ſelf in every thing, not only to *Gods wil* but alſo to his *wiſdom*: And whatſoever comes upon me (ſaid ſhe) I wil *bear it patiently*, becauſe by Gods wil it comes; yea, I wil bear it *chearfully*, becauſe by Gods *wiſdom*, it is thus ordered, and it wil work (as all things elſe) *for mine advantage*.

And upon this reaſon ſhe was wont to account the *death of her Huſband*, and *of her Son as extraordinary perquiſits and advantages to her*; and therfore I ſhould offend not only againſt *free obedience* and *ſubmiſſion*, but *alſo againſt common prudence* (ſaid ſhe) if I ſhould wiſh my *condition*

dition otherwiſe, then *now it is*; I cannot *wiſh any thing ſo gainful and proſperous to me, as this which my heavenly Father in his wiſdom hath ordered for me.*

And as in *ſuffering*, ſo in *doing*, ſhe reſigns up her ſelf wholy, and reſolves (by *the grace of God*) *to do whatſoever is her duty* in every thing, and therfore ſhe propoſes henceforth to *deliberate* of *nothing*, but what is her duty, in this, or that particular; and without further pauſe go about it.

When matters of difficulty came, ſhe uſually conſulted with the moſt *learned* and *pious Divines* ſhe could meet with, to learn what was her *duty therin*; ſhe truſted not *her own* judgment, nor *miſtruſted theirs*; but preſently applied her ſelf to do, as *they* directed *her*.

In the Tranſactions of worldly affairs, though ſhe foreſaw ſomtimes inconveniences enſuing by following their *directions*, yet more ſhe feared might *otherwiſe* happen, and therfore ſhe would not neglect *them*. And, when the ſucceſs of any buſineſs anſwered not to *her* expectation, ſhe ſeemed not troubled at it; her *conſcience* bearing her *witnes*, that ſhe had done what was *her duty* to do; and ſee-

ing it was *God*, who in his *wiſdom* denied *her* ſucceſs, ſhe would ſtil *hope*, and *ſay*, Though at *this time*, *this way*, *this buſineſs proſpered not*, yet at *ſome other time*, *ſome other way*, *it wil be ſucceſful unto me*. *This doing my duty wil be ſome time*, *or other*, *ſome way or other*, *for mine advantage*.

And theſe her *mortifications* were not without a great degree of *ſanctification*, both in the *inward* and *outward* man; for to theſe ſhe joyned her former purpoſe of adorning her *ſoul*, more *ſpecioufly* with thoſe *virtues* which *our Savior* commends, in his *Sermon*, *on the Mount*; and now ſhe endevours to put them in practice, more *perfectly*, and more *exactly* then formerly *ſhe* had done.

And firſt *mercifulneſs* begins to *exceed*: ſhe was moſt *liberal* before, now *ſhe* is (conſidering her eſtate, brought into a very narrow compaſs) *moſt bountiful*: for wheras before the *main* of her *revenue* was *for her own maintenance*, the *ſuperfluity* of it for her *charity*, now the *main of her revenues goes abroad for charity*; the *other only* is *left at home for her maintenance*: I have heard her compute, and the remainder after ſuch and ſuch deeds of *charity* to be expended quarterly, that ſmal pittance

tance was only it, ſhe accounted hers, and ordered her courſe of life accordingly; very wel content, though ſhe her ſelf made a *ſhift with Agurs ſingle food,* and *rayment, Prov.* 30.8. that others who depended on her ſhould (as the houſhold of *Lemuels virtuous woman*) *be fed and cloathed with double,* c.31.21.

And with this, *her meeknes exceeds* alſo: *meeknes* was the *attire* of her *ſoul,* before, now it is the *ornament* therof: hath the *fulneſs,* and *length,* and *comelineſs* too, of an *ornament* or *robe:* And I need ſay nothing of the *richneſs,* and *glory,* and *beauty* of *that robe,* a *meek and quiet ſpirit:* now ſhe grows a moſt eminent pattern of *meeknes* and *gentlenes* in every kind, and all that knew *her* admired and reverenced *her* for it.

And her *compaſſion,* which was thought to be with the deepeſt before, goes deeper now; ſhe had formerly the *bowels* of a moſt tender *mother,* towards every one in diſtreſs, now ſhe put on the *bowels of God;* and ſo enlarged ſhe grows in her *bowels,* that ſhe ſeldom ſees, or hears of any object of pity, but they *yearn* ſo much within *her,* as to force tears from her eys: And it is hard to ſay, whether *her bowels,*

or

or her hand, (*her compaſſion,* or *her charity*) contributed moſt to the *comfort* of the *poor* and *needy.*

And now ſhe is almoſt pined with *hunger,* and *faint with thirſt after righteouſnes*; ever and anon ſighing, *Oh that I could attain unto it! oh that my ways were made ſo direct!* It was uſual with her at night to compoſe her ſelf to ſleep, ſaying to her woman (not without ſome joy) *wel now I am one day neerer my journies end*; comforting her ſelf then, when her *body* ſhould *ſleep* in the *bed* of *her grave,* that the days *of ſin* ſhould be accompliſhed, & then ſhe ſhould be *perfect, as her heavenly Father is perfect.*

Particularly, *her hunger and thirſt after juſtice* was moſt commendable, *that judgment might run down as a ſtream, and righteouſneſs like a mighty river:* And for *juſtice* in *her* own *affairs,* there lives not (I believe) any *one,* more punctual and exact then *ſhe was.* She peruſed a *learned and ſtrict Treatiſe of juſtice,* and made *thoſe rules* her *ſtandard,* practiſing them moſt preciſely: And in more perplexed and difficult caſes ſhe would ſend ſome Divine (of whoſe *piety* and *fervor* ſhe had a good opinion) and deſired them to pray

(as

(as *ſhe her ſelf* did) that ſhe might be moſt juſt in *them*, neither ſwerving to the *left*, nor to the *right hand*.

In her abſence from home, the *Sutlers* of the *Army* came to her *houſe*, and took *proviſion*, paying for every particular the higheſt *price*; which when her Servant accounted to her again, *ſhe* computed exactly, what the particulars coſt *her*; and then ſent ſolicitouſly up and down the *Army* to find out the *Sutlers*, and to *reſtore* the *overplus*, which ſhe thought not *juſt* to be taken by *her*: and *her hunger* and *thirſt after that juſtice* was not *ſatisfied*, til *ſhe* heard it was *ſo* done.

And for engagements deſcended to her (after *care* taken to ſatisfy them with all poſſible ſpeed) *ſhe* lamented often with tears that ſhe could not actually diſcharge them, ſaying, *though they may conſiſt with juſtice, yet they could not conſiſt with that outward thankfulnes which ſhe deſired to expreſs*, 2 *King*. 4. 1.

And for the other points of *our Saviors Sermon*, *her charity ſuſpected* few, *judged* none of *her neighbors*; an *Eagles ey* ſhe had, to eſpie any *good*, though but *inclinations* in them, and with a favorable conſtruction, *judged* the *beſt* of what ſhe heard, or *ſaw*

in

in them: yet a *moles ey*, to eſpy the *evil*, though *acts* in her brethren; a *mote* of *goodneſs* could not eſcape her *ſight*; but it muſt be a *beam* of *evil*, her ey would take notice of: and *her* ſlowneſs to believe miſcarriages in any one, drave all *tale-bearers from her*: yet when *faults* were *evident* (in ſuch as ſhe had charge over) ſhe would reprove with a great deal of power.

She was moſt *reſpective* to her *ſuperiors*; and *moſt courteous* and *affable* towards *inferiors*; And very cautious leſt ſhe ſhould *give* offence to *one*, or *other*, either in *word* or *geſture*; and as *cautious* too, leſt any of them ſhould *take offence* at any *ſpeech* or *look* of hers towards them; for either way (ſaid ſhe) *in offences given, or taken, God is offended*; and her *humility* in *begging forgiveneſs* from others, was moſt ſingular: of late, your Ladyſhip knows, ſhe ſeldom ſlept, til ſhe had asked *forgiveneſs* as wel as *bleſſing* from you; if ſhe had *offended* you, ſhe thought your *pardon neceſſary*; if not, it was no cumberance, to have *ſupernumerary pardons* from you, lying by her.

But to ſee this honorable Lady, begging *forgiveneſs* from her *inferiors*, and

ſervants

ſervants (as ſhe often did) for her *angry words* to them, or her *chiding frowns* upon them, was that, which puts all to ſhame, and to aſtoniſhment: now and then when ſhe had expreſſed no *anger, outwardly*, yet their pardon ſhe would deſire, becauſe ſaid ſhe, ſomwhat I felt within my ſelf, too *like anger* againſt you, though I ſuppreſſed it, aſſoon as I could.

More then once, or twice of late, ſhe *brought her* gift *to the Altar* (was in her Cloſet upon her knees towards praier) and there *ſhe remembred*, that *her Brother might poſſibly have ſomwhat againſt her*, (for ſuch a word, or ſuch a look, or a neglective ſilence a litle before) and *ſhe left her gift at the Altar, and went, and was reconciled*, (asked pardon) and then came and offered: ſo that her chief care was ſtil, to *lift up in praier pure hands, without wrath*; If there were any wrath in her againſt *others*, or any *in others againſt her*, ſhe would have it allayed, before *ſhe offered her gift of praier*.

And though all theſe *graces & virtues* (by Gods help) did thus *increaſe* in *her*, yet a true poverty of ſpirit *encreaſed* alſo in *her*. The more *holy*, the *more pious* ſhe was, the more *humbly ſhe walked with*

Col:

God: In *her* greateſt *abundance* ſhe complained moſt of *ſpiritual wants.* Sure, the bright *luſtre* of her virtue gave her an advantage, to *eſpie* many corruptions in *her ſelf*, which ſhe could not before; and theſe ſhe lamented more ſadly, now, then heretofore.

And in theſe *duties of praier*, ſhe advanced forward too. Now her Nurſery muſt have an *Oratory* annexed to it; and her *children* their *private devotions*; they are appointed by her, to read *Morning* and *Evening Praiers*, and *Leſſons* at their *riſing* up, and at their *lying* down: and their ſpare minutes being deſtined as *hers* alſo were to *conning of Pſalms without book*; they open the day with one of the ſeven *Euchariſtical* Pſalms (for thankſgiving to God for *renuing his loving kindnes to them that Morning*) and they *ſhut* up the *day*, with one of the *Penitential Pſalms* (praying for pardon of the offenſes of the day) this care ſhe took to ſeaſon her Childrens affections and *memories* with good things; and now ſhe trains them up alſo, to thoſe *virtues* commended in our *Saviors Sermon*, and an explication of *them*, ſhe directs, ſhould be annexed to their firſt *Catechiſm.*

And

And for the *Church praiers* in *her houſe*, there was of late ſome *exceptions* againſt continuing that practice; and ſome danger, the *exceptions* apprehended, likely to have enſued upon it: Hereupon *the Book of Martyrs* was brought, and the ſtory of the *Lady Knevit in Norfolk*, in the time of *Queen Mary* was publickly read, which in ſhort is this,

"A perſecuted Proteſtant Miniſter, be-
"ing in her houſe, reads the Morning and
"the Evening praier, of King *Edward* the
"ſixt his Service-book (the ſame with our
"Service-book) conſtantly in her family,
"though there were an Act of Parliament
"againſt it. Hereupon the holy Lady is
"threatned to be puniſhed for it; ſhe
"goes on notwithſtanding, in that courſe
"of piety, promiſing to welcome the pu-
"niſhment, when ere it came: And though
"many reſorted to her houſe, who had
"diſaffection enough to her piety, and
"particularly to that Form of praier, yet
"they commonly kneeled down, and joy-
"ned in praiers with her; God would not
"ſuffer their hands to puniſh, nor their
"mouths to ſpeak againſt her, for it.

And now when *every paſſage* in this ſtory was ſo readily *appliable*, to this our

pious

pious Lady alſo, ſhe wanted not an *anſwer* for the *Objectors*, nor *courage* to go on in her wonted courſe: and the *event* was moſt particularly *according* to the *preſident*; for though *complaints* were made, and *threats ſent* to us; and many quartered upon her, who *liked not our Form of Praier*, and had *power to ſuppreſs it*, yet *God ſuffered them not to execute that their power upon us*. And, *Madame*, if the *Lady Knevit* was thought fit, to be Chronicled (amongſt the Martyrs and Confeſſors) for this alone, I pray let not this of our Lady be forgotten: And I ſhal preſume that your Ladyſhip, and every one who conſiders theſe, and ſuch like examples, wil hazard any thing, rather then alter your courſe of piety, and conſtant uſe of our ſacred Liturgy.

And ſhe was as *conſtant*, and as *reſolute for her other howrs* of *praiers and meditation*. The entertainments of honorable perſons, or the haſt of neceſſary buſineſs, ſhould not excuſe *her* from theſe other *devotions*; In her deepeſt *griefs* and diſturbances, in her higheſt *comfors*, and gratulations, ſhe was moſt conſtant at them: and though ſhe could not, at theſe times, diſcharge thoſe duties at her *ordinary howrs*, yet

yet her *eys* were not *ſuffered to ſleep*, til ſhe had gon through with *them*; when *ſhe* muſt loſe her ſleep, or *God this his ſervice*, ſhe readily reſolved, which was *fitteſt* of the *two*.

Her laſt work, every *Evening*, was to *review* with ſome diligence all the wor[illegible] of that *day*, her *thoughts*, *words*, and *deeds*; what in this room, what in that; what in this company, what in that; what *good* ſhe had *done*, what *evil* ſhe had *committed*; what *opportunities* of *benefiting* others, ſhe had *embraced*, or *neglected*; and what comforts and *bleſſings* ſhe had that *day received*: and after this *examination*, giving *thanks*, and begging *pardon*, in every particular, as occaſion required, having *communed with her own heart, in her bed-chamber*, ſhe was ſtil.

Thus ſhe was a very good proficient in theſe ſeveral *points*, of our *Saviors Sermon*, went on from one degree to another, in moſt of them. Faith, and judgment (the weighty *matters* of the law, the chief virtues) ſhe was moſt eminent in; and for *tything of mint and cummin* (theſe leſſer *virtues*) *ſhe would not leave them, undone*.

She thought not all the *laws* of *God* performed,

performed, If any laws of the King were neglected; and therfore she was wont earnestly to press *obedience* to *all things*, which the *laws* of the *Realm require*; even to *penal laws* against *shooting*, and *hunting*, and the like; and would not suffer any of *hers* to transgress, in these lesser matters: Severely (though juditiously, and truly enough) affirming, *That the Law-givers made their penal laws, for obedience, not for Mulct; and their first and chief intention was, that their laws should be observed, not that the offender should be punished.*

And having thus far improved *her self* (by the grace of God) in an *holy* and *spiritual life*, she now labors what she can, to *improve others* also; and now she is *strong*, to *strengthen her brethren.*

A Covenant she enters with her *acquaintance*, especially *those* with whom she *frequently* conversed, that they should take liberty to *reprove* whatsoever they saw *amiss* in her: and also to give her *liberty* to deal *so with them*; saying to them, *there is no friendship without this; and if you suffer me to be undone for ever; or I you; how are we friends?*

That counsel which *she* gave to *young Mothers*,

Mothers, not to be *fond* of their *Children*, or *Husbands*, came most *properly*, and *most pathetically* from *her*. *Oh, I have had my portion* (said she) *of these very comforts, with the first; no one woman more*; but there is no *lasting*, nor *true pleasure* in *them*: There is no real *comfort* from any *espousals*, but from those to *Christ*; this, (I say) came most fitly from *her*, here she had *tripped* once, and again, and now she fore-warns others of the dangers, lest *they* should *stumble* at *it*.

The benefit she had received from *her* childhood, by *pious* and *learned Divines*, makes her solicitous to provide such for her *neighbors*; and til *they* were acquainted (as wel as *she*) with the *conversations* of the *people*, *she* would, some way or other, hint unto them, what *virtues* it would be proper to commend in their Sermons, and *discourses* to the *Parish*: and for *catechizing* the *young*, and for *visiting* the *sick she her self* took a special regard, as if the *cure* had depended more upon the *Patroness*, then upon her *Clerk*.

And the remembrance of those *heavenly comforts*, she frequently had, while she *playd upon Davids harp*, set her on to commend *those Psalms*, for *daily* & *hourly devotions to all*.

Yet

Yet ſome *diſcord* ſhe found of late, even from that *harp*; obſerving ſuch *Pſalms* of *David*, wherin he (by his *publick ſpirit*, or in *zeal* for *divine juſtice*, upon the *publick enemies* of *God*) pronounces *curſes*, ſpitefully picked out, and maliciouſly applyed, both in *private families*, and publick Congregations to our own *enemies*; This ſhe often lamented as a moſt notorious *profanation* of the holy *Book of Pſalms*, and as an evident *breach of charity*: Oh, that ſweeteſt harp ſounds moſt harſhly, unleſs it be touched with pure hands, without wrath; Therfore (ſaid ſhe) the *people muſt be often warned* (*in theſe days of contention, and oppoſition*) *to ſing* Davids *Pſalms*, *with* Davids *ſpirit*: And when *curſing of enemies* came in, to reflect (as *David* oft did) upon the *luſts* and *corruption* of *our hearts*; and then the 109 Pſalm, (a common *curſe* among the *Hebrews*) be upon *theſe* our *vileſt enemies*, and moſt deadly foes, is litle enough.

Neither was her care of *improving* others, confined to the preſent *age*; *deſigns* and *projects* ſhe had alſo *for poſterity*; of ſetting up ſchools, and *manu-facture trades* in the *Pariſh*; to ſhut out (by thoſe engines) for ever, *ignorance*, *idleneſs*, and *want*.

But

But that *magnificent*, and moſt *religious contrivement*, that there might be *places* for the *education* of *young Gentlewomen*, & for retirement of *Widows*, (as *Colleges* and the *Inns of Court* and *Chancery* are for *men*) in ſeveral *parts* of the *Kingdom*, This, was much in her *thoughts*; hoping therby that *learning* and *religion* might flouriſh more in *her own Sex*, then heretofore, having ſuch opportunities to *ſerve* the *Lord, without diſtraction*: A *project* this *adequate* to the *wiſdom*, and *piety*, of this *Mother* in *Iſrael*; and not beyond the *power*, and *intereſt*, ſhe had with great ones, to have effected it.

But theſe *evil times* diſ-abled *her* quite, and diſ-couraged her ſomwhat, from attempting much, in theſe *her deſigns*, ſhe returns therfore to *improve her ſelf* with the greater *vigor*; If her *virtue* cannot *ſhine* out over all the Kingdom, it ſhal *ſhine*, and *burn* ſo much the *more within her own ſoul*; and now *ſhe* grows ſo ſtrict to *her ſelf*, and ſo ſevere in examining *her own heart*, that, with *holy Job*, *ſhe fears all her works*: *She* had *alway* a *tender conſcience*; but now that exceeds too, in *quickneſs*, and *tenderneſs*; and this holy fear began at laſt to breed in her many

doubtings

doubtings and *ſcruples* (which occaſioned the laſt of theſe adjoyning Letters) and in theſe *doubtings* and *fears*, ſhe ſeldom truſted *her* own *judgment*, but adviſed with *learned Divines*; and when ſhe met with any *one* of *learning* and *piety*, *ſhe* propoſes *her caſes*, and *ſeeks reſolves*.

And upon theſe fears ſhe would *diſpute againſt her ſelf* very *ſharply*; ſcarce *omitting* any *objection* material, nor *accepting* any *anſwer*, which was not *fully ſatisfactory*; and when ſhe was once clearly *reſolved*, ſhe cheerfully *ſubmitted*, and ordered *her* future *practice* accordingly.

And it is very obſervable, how this *holy fear*, (as her other virtues) extended it ſelf alſo, not only to greater *matters*, but alſo to *leſſer*, almoſt to *all*: ſuch was her *love* to *God*, and her *reverential aw* of his *majeſty*, that ſhe feared to offend *him*, in the *leaſt* particular: *If it be but a mote, may it not grow* (ſaid ſhe) *to a beam in mine ey?* Thus the poyſon, which Satan, or her carnal ſcruples would have inſtilled into her, ſhe often turned into hony.

And ſuch zealous *Anxieties*, as theſe, ſuch *holy fears* of diſpleaſing *God* in *any*, the *leaſt* thing, are ſtrong *arguments* of moſt *ardent love* to *God*; and of moſt *paſ-*

ſionate

ſionate deſires to pleaſe *him*; oh how gredily did ſhe *aſpire* after *perfection*, while *ſhe* thus *ſolicitouſly fears* the *leaſt imperfection*.

And now in the very laſt *ſtage*, of *her Chriſtian* race, ſhe grows ſo *exact*, that *all time* ſeems *tedious* to *her*, which tends not to *Heaven*; and thereupon *ſhe* now reſolves, to get looſe from the multitude of *her worldly employments*; *and provides to remove from her ſtately manſion*, to a litle houſe neer adjoyning; and in that *houſe* and *garden* with a *book*, and a *wheel*, and a *maid* or two, to retire *her ſelf* from *worldly buſineſs*, and *unneceſſary viſits*, and ſo ſpend her whole *time*: and ſhe took as great delight in *projecting* this *humiliation* and *privacy*. as others do, in being advanced to *publick honors*, *and ſtate employments*.

Now toward the end of *her race*, all her *ſtrength* ſeems *weakneſs*, and her *quickeſt ſpeed* ſeems *ſlothfulneſs*; Therefore at *Chriſtmas laſt*, *ſhe* prepared to be at the holy *Communion*, with the firſt; and after that, her ſoul ſtil wanting the *ſtrength* and *vigor* it aimed at, ſhe thinks of comming with the laſt too, the next Lords day: But he, who hath let, wil let; for that very

morning she had a very sore *conflict*, and great *anguish in spirit*: one while *her unworthiness*, another while her *dulness* and *driness* deterred *her* from approaching to the *holy Sacrament*; and then the *singularity* and *unaccustomedness* of receiving *so often*, disswaded *her*; after an *howr* or *two*, some reason *she* found to presume this might be from the *Devil*, her *grand enemy*; (who was unwilling that the *castle* which he now *besieged*, should be *double-walled* against *him*) and thereupon *she* continues *her* resolution, and came to the *blessed Sacrament*, that second day also, and received with it much *comfort* and *peace*. And not many daies after, the Devil brought his strongest batteries, and labour'd to take this castle by storm; *Temptations again she had*, and those vehement and fierce, to *suspect her* whole course of *life*, as so ful of *weakness* at best, and oftentimes so ful of *gross corruptions*; *Her faith* so *weak*, her *repentance* so *faint*, that *God* would not *accept* of *her*: But *her shield of Faith* in *Christs merits*, soon repelled *these darts*, and *her wonted Sanctuary* of *prayer* secured *her* presently from *this* storm of *temptation*.

And in *peace* and *tranquillity* of *mind*, her

her *piety*, and *zeal* of *juſtice*, hurry *her* to *London* (in the bitterelt ſeaſon of this winter) to take order for the diſcharge of ſome *engagements*: this *ſhe* knew was *her duty*, and that ſhe *her ſelf* ſhould take that *journy*, was conceived the *neceſſary* means to perform *that duty*, and therfore ſhe ventures upon *it*, and leaves the *ſucceſs* to *God*.

There, at *London*, ſhe ſtrengthens *her ſelf* yet more, for the *final period* of her *race*, by receiving the *holy Sacrament* again: But alas, Madam, Though her *inward ſtrength encreaſes*, her *outward ſtrength decays*, and her *weak conſumptive body*, by a *cold* there *taken*, grows *weaker*: yet th ence *ſhe* came homeward, and at *Oxford*, her *cough* and *cold* very much *encreaſing*, *ſhe*, with moſt *earneſt praiers*, and holy *meditations* (which a *pious* and *learned Divine* ſuggeſted to *her*) prepares *her ſelf* for *death*.

After a while they, who were about *her*, fearing the *pangs* of *death* to be upon *her*, began to *weep* and *lament*; the whole company grew ſad and heavy; *ſhe* only continued in her former *condition*, not at all *ſorrowful*, nor *affrighted* by *theſe meſſengers* of *death*: Then the Phyſician coming, and upon conſideration, ſaying, *Here is no ſign*

of death, nor of much danger; *by Gods help ſhe may recover again*; the whole company was very much *comforted*, and *cheared*; ſhe only in *her* former *indifferency*; no *alteration* at all could be perceived in *her*, as if *ſhe* had been the only party, in the chamber, unconcerned in *it*; neither fear of *death* could *grieve* nor *trouble her*, nor *hopes* of life and *health rejoice her*; *I have wholy reſigned up my ſelf to God* (ſaid *ſhe*) and *not mine, but his Wil be done*; *whether in life* or *death:* She was not *afraid* to *live*, and ſtil endure the *miſeries* of this life (and ever and anon *encounter* with *Satan* too) becauſe *ſhe had* a *powerful God* able to *uphold her*: nor yet *afraid* to *dy*, and appear at Gods *Judgment ſeat*, becauſe ſhe had a *merciful Redeemer*, willing to *ſave her*.

They who write of *perfection*, account it an high degree, *Vitam in patientiâ & mortem in voto*, to be content to live, but deſirous to dy: yet ſurely, this here, *In æquilibrio ad vitam, & ad mortem*, to be wholy *indifferent*, and to be moſt *equally* enclined to *either*, to *deſire nothing*, to *fear nothing*, but wholy to *reſign* our ſelves to *God*, accounting that to be the *beſt* (whatſoever it is) which *he* pleaſes to ſend, This, this is to be a *ſtrong man in Chriſt*; And this

this in our moſt *pious Lady* was a very neer approach unto *perfection.*

It was related for a very great *virtue* in S. *Cyprian*, that, *Maluit obſequi præceptis Chriſti quàm vel ſic coronari*, He had rather *live* and *obey* God, then *dy* and *reign* in *glory*: But this, to have no *propenſion* at all *more* to *one*, then to the *other*, to be wholy *indifferent*, to *work* on ſtil in *Gods vineyard*, or to be *called* up to *heaven*, to receive *pay*, this may be a *greater virtue*: And this perfect *indifference* to do, or ſuffer *Gods wil*, in *life*, or *death*, appearing in this ſervant of *God*, was ſuch an *act* of *ſelf-denial*, which they, who obſerved it in *her*, could not but ſet a ſpecial *character* upon, moſt worthy to be commended to your *Ladyſhip.*

Thus *ſhe* was brought from *Oxford*, *home*, and now being far ſpent, and near *her end*, *ſhe* could ſpeak litle, yet expreſſed a great deal of *thankfulneſs* to *God*, who had brought *her* ſafe, to dy in *her* own *houſe*, among *her deareſt friends.*

And there *ſhe* ſhewed thoſe friends a rare *pattern* of patience in the extremity of *her ſickneſs.*

But the *tranquillity* of *mind*, which *ſhe* had in *theſe her laſt daies*, was moſt obſer-

vable; That the *Devil* who had ſo often *perplexed her*, with violent *temptations*, ſhould now leave *her* to *reſt* and *eaſe*: *ſhe* was wont to fear *his moſt violent aſſaults* on *her death-bed*, (as *his* practice commonly is) but now *God* (it ſeems) had chained *him* up, and enabled *her* (by *his grace*) *to tread Satan under feet*: not a word of *complaint*, nor the leaſt *diſturbance*, or *diſquiet*, to be perceived by *her*, which is a ſufficient argument to us, (who knew how *open* a *breaſt* ſhe had, to reveal any thing in that kind, eſpecially to *Divines*, whereof ſhe had now *ſtore* about *her*) of her exceeding *great quietneſs*, and *peace*: and this *tranquillity* of *mind*, more clearly now appearing at *her death*, then ordinarily in the time *of her health*, is a great evidence, to me, of *Gods* moſt *tender mercy* and *love* towards *her*, and of ſome good *aſſurance*, in *her*, of her *ſalvation*.

This *quiet* gave *her* leave, though now very *faint* and *weak*, to be moſt *vigorous*, and moſt *inſtant* at *praiers*; *ſhe* calls for other *help*, very *faintly*; but for *praiers*, moſt *heartily*, and often (in thoſe few howrs *ſhe* lived at home) and after the *office* of the *Morning* was performed, ſhe gave ſtrict charge, that every one of *her family* (who could

could be ſpared from her) ſhould go to *Church* and *pray* for *her*; and then in a word of *exhortation* to *them*, who ſtayed by *her*, ſaying, *fear God, fear God*, ſhe moſt ſweetly ſpent *her laſt breath*; and ſo moſt *comfortably* yeilded up *her ſpirit*, to *him* who made *it*: and was (we doubt not) admitted into Heaven, into the *number* of the *Apoſtles* and *Saints* of God (on S. *Matthias day*) there to reign in the glory of God for evermore.

In which moment of *her death*, there ſeemed as litle *outward pain*, as *inward conflict*; none could perceive, either *twitch*, or *groan*, or *gaſp*, or *ſigh*, only *her ſpirits failed*; and ſo ſhe *vaniſhed* from us, as if *God* had intended *her here* ſome *fore-taſt* not only of the *reſt* of the *ſoul*, but alſo of the *eaſe* of the *body*, which ſhe ſhould enjoy *hereafter* in *Heaven*.

Thus in *her youth*, *ſhe* was *ſoon perfected*, and in a *ſhort time* of five and thirty years, ſhe *fulfilled a long time*.

And having in a moſt acceptable manner practiſed the *duties*, of our *moſt bleſſed Saviours Sermon*, ſhe is now (we firmly believe) partaker of the *bleſſedneſs* too of that *Sermon*; through *Chriſts mercy*, *ſhe* hath obtained *mercy*, and *enjoys* the *viſion*

of *God*, in the *kingdom* of *Heaven*, where ſhe is moſt fully ſatisfied with *delight*, and *comfort*, and *joy*.

There were *theſe*, and many *other virtues your Ladyſhip* knows, obſervable in *this your* moſt *pious* Daughter; but I pretend not to relate all, many I omit, becauſe *common* to all the *ſervants of God*; and many other *excellencies* alſo there were in her (I doubt not) which *ſhe* concealed from *her* neareſt friends; and indeed, many of *theſe*, I have named, *ſhe* endevoured ſtudiouſly to conceal from *us*, but now, and then, unawares, ſhe diſcovered them, and ſo I came acquainted with *them*.

And now, *Madam*, you have obſerved, that the *growth* of *grace*, which was moſt evident, and apparent in *her*, eſpecially theſe late years (as of *corn* from a *blade* to an *ear*, then to a *bloſſome*, and thence towards ful *maturity* and *ripeneſs*) was moſt of all promoted, by the *afflictions*, which *God* ſent upon *her*; the loſs of *her* deareſt *friends*, and other *troubles*, were as a *ſhowr* of *rain*, to a *crop* of *corn*, on a *dry ground*; an evident *benefit*, and a preſent *improvement*, by *it*.

And was there not then ſomewhat *extraordinary*

traordinary in that *dream* of *hers*, ſoon after *her Sons death?* wherin, ſhe being much *troubled* for that *loſs*, *a ladder preſently appeared, reaching* (*with that Ladder in* Jacobs *dream*) *from earth to heaven*; after the *death* of *her Son*, every one of us could ſenſibly perceive her *climbing* up *higher, and higher every day*, in *piety*, and *holineſs*, til *God* exalted *her*, to the *top* of *Jacobs ladder*, the *height* of *glory* in *heaven*.

So may it be, with every one, who ſuffers *inward*, or *outward affliction*.

And now though, all this while, I have been *comforting your Ladyſhip*, and wiping the *tears* from *your eys*, yet I have deteined you too long (I fear) from *improving this affliction* ſent upon you (the loſs of *your deareſt child*) with that *haſt* and *gredineſs* you deſired, to your *ſpiritual benefit*: I ſhal help you what I can hereafter, by begging in my *praiers* the *ſtrengthning*, aud *eſtabliſhing grace of God*, for *you*, to bring *ſtore* of *heavenly comfort* into your *ſoul*, from *this your* preſent *ſorrow*.

And for the further ſatisfaction of *thoſe* to whom you ſhal pleaſe to communicate *this relation*, I have prefixed a *diſcourſe* (by many *Letters* too) wherin *much* of a *Character* of *this your Daughter* is conteined;

It was *compoſed* for *her*, and *delivered* to *her*, and *left* among *her Papers* (and though upon the tranſcribing of the Letters I have altered and added ſomwhat, yet that was according to *her* deſire and the directions I received from *her ſelf* after *her* peruſal of them,) purpoſely, I confeſs, *diſguiſed*, becauſe I thought it not fit, to be too *particular* with a *perſon* of that quality, nor to write of *things* of that *nature* with that *diſtance* and *reſpect*, which otherwiſe would have becomed *me*, in *my addreſſes* to *her Honor*; and *your Ladyſhip* wil quickly diſcern, that many of the *objections*, and of the *anſwers* too, came from *her own ſelf*, and therfore proper enough, to be joyned with *this relation* of *her Life*. That herein I may *promote* the *ſervice* of *our gracious Lord*, and *comfort you*, or any other of *his true ſervants*, is the utmoſt *drift*, and moſt earneſt *praier*, of him, who is,

Your ſervant in

April 15. 1647. *Chriſt Jeſus.*

The End.

ERRATA.

PAg.9.l.3.r.Oculos. l.23.r.ſpecial.p.17.l.29.r.me wandring. p.18.l.7.r.afflictions. p.22.l.11.r. wil (I doubt not)p.30.l.13.r.towards us.p.46.l.2.r.(as ſhe conceives) l.4. r. her. l.15.*dele* us. p.51. l.7. r. ſhould take p.59.l.10.r.of fervor p.66.l.7.r.at firſt, p.77. l.2.r.her p.82.l.24.r.ſinfulneſs, p.83.l.11. r. filled p.87.l.6. r. the regenerate. p. 89.l.5. r. a true p.94.l.22. r. of nature, p.104. l.7.r.exerciſe p.105. l.29.r. then he is p.106.l.6.r.ſlily p.108.l.10.r. holineſs p.110.l.10.r.this duty p.118.l.9.r.degrees of perſwaſion, there are ſeverall degrees of firmneſs p.120.l.27 r.doubting:p.146.l.2 r.emptying p.156 l. 19. r. and (if need were) p.161.l.13.r. Poverty p.165.l.26.r. (as ſhe thought) p.171 .l.2.r. tenderneſs of p. 172. l. 17. r. *ſuch ſtate* ib. l. 26. r. *Pages* p.175.l.22.r. conſciouſneſs p.180. l.27.r. to ſome Divines p.183. l.3 r.puts us all p.190.l.3. r. Prophetick

THE RETVRNES OF Spiritual *comfort* and *griefe* IN A DEVOUT SOUL.

Repreſented (by entercourſe of *Letters*) to the Right Honourable, the Lady *LETICE*, Vi-Counteſs *Falkland*, in her Life time.

AND

Exemplified in the holy *Life* and *Death* of the ſaid Honorable Lady.

Publiſhed for the benefit and eaſe of all who labour under ſpiritual affliction. by *Iohn Duncan*

LONDON,
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(1)

to propagate the true Religion, by force and war, (and therupon engaged themſelves in ſpoiling and robbing, and ſlaying the diſſentient Party) who being now of another opinion, that to reform Religion by the ſword, is an offering violence to the tender conſciences of many, and a doing evil, that good may come of it, ſpend their time wholly in lamenting their former error and ſin; and their eſtates, in repairing ſuch men, whom in that their error, they had ſpoiled and injured.

Though the action was done upon a ful perſwaſion of the lawfulneſs of it, yet that perſwaſion appearing now erroneous, ſuch repentance, and reſtitution, they think required of them.

And in others, where theſe motions produce not a contrary opinion, yet doubts they may produce; and thus it may be with you: when you undertook this, or that action, you were fully perſwaded in your mind of the lawfulneſs of it; but now doubts ariſe in you concerning it; and you cannot determine whether you did lawfully, or unlawfully in it; in this caſe your labour wil be to reſolve your ſelf *de novo*, to ſtudy and conſult of the lawfulneſs of that action, as if you were

were now again to undertake it; and when your doubt is resolved into an opinion, you need litle direction in that case: If it be the same opinion again resumed, which guided you to that action, then you may bless God, and plead your innocency in that action, against all Objectors, and objections: If you are convinced by reason, and argument, to alter your opinion, then the former direction is to you in this case also.

And thus I meet with some, in every street, who took Oaths, and Covenants, upon the ful perswasion of the lawfulness of them, now so much doubting whether they did well, or ill, therin, that they consult their Books, and their spiritual Directors afresh, to be resolved concerning them: and when they alter their opinions (though their Oath cannot be unsworn, nor the actions, done in pursuance of it, un-done) yet I hope to see them so truly penitent, that these sins wil not be laid to their charge.

And thirdly, if these motions which arise in your mind, upon re-examination of what you have done, be scruples only; Arguments (or objections rather) suggested as probable, which do no way divert

you from your opinion which guided you in this, or that action; nor yet bring you into a true *doubt*, whether your *action* were *lawful* or *not*; in this Case, the more you neglect these scrupulous motions, the better and the sooner you wil possess your soul in quietness and peace.

And now Sir, that you may be the better able to eject those scruples you have already, and to prevent others also hereafter, you shal do wel; First, truly to inform your self of the cause, or original, whence they proceed.

In some they proceed from the temper of the body: a melancholick constitution, which is most subject to fears and sadnes, if it hath a tender conscience therwith, is commonly ful of these scruples also: In others they proceed from a sceptical wit, which is alway enquiring, seldom satisfied; if that temper and this wit meet together with a tender conscience, scruples wil abound: In others they may be from the Devil; he (by indisposing our bodies, or raising fancies, or otherwise more immediatly by himself, without any advantage taken from us) casts these scruples into our minds.

And from what causes soever these scruples

ſcruples proceed, they commonly come like Angels of light, with goodly ſhews, and holy language, moving to more exact obedience (as is pretended) and to more univerſal, and more punctual performances. And this they uſually urge ſo eagerly, that it is hard to diſtinguiſh them from thoſe motions of the holy Spirit, which I ſpake of even now: your examination of them therfore muſt be with ſom diligence: and if after that, you find thoſe motions & fervors in your mind, not to be from the holy Spirit, but ſcruples proceeding from one of theſe fountains, or from ſuch like;

Then ſecondly, you may conſider the many inconveniencies which they may bring upon you; how they weaken your mind, make it unſtable, as water; how they diſturb you in *many* performances, divert you from ſome; how inconſiſtent they are with that ſerenity of conſcience, and chearfulneſs of mind, which otherwiſe you might enjoy; how they darken your underſtanding, and make your wil and affections alſo dul and heavy in holy duties, and your whole life uncomfortable; how they lead into error and ſuperſtition oft-times, and may at length bring you into fear and perplexity;

plexity; yea (if the Devil can have his wil) even into deſperation it ſelf: when you reckon up theſe, and what other inconveniencies you find, or can fear from theſe ſcruples, you wil not delay to obſerve what you think fitteſt for your cure, or eaſe.

Therfore, thirdly, ſome directions I ſhal name: and I muſt begin with the chief; Humble and fervent praier to God, from whom alone you can receive comfort and quiet: then ghoſtly advice and direction from friends, praying God to direct your Director, and reſolving (if poſſible) to reſt ſatisfied in what he directs. Thirdly, divert, I pray, your ſelf from theſe ſcruples (as much as you can) caſt off the thoughts of them, foment them not by heeding them, nor by converſing frequently, with ſcrupulous perſons; yea, drive them away by croſs ſcruples, that is, propounding your more probable Arguments againſt thoſe leſs probable.

Or a fourth way may be, by adhering to thoſe opinions, which are moſt probable, moſt favorable, and moſt common, and by ordering our practiſes after them; rigid, and ſingular opinions open a wide dore

dore for ſcruples to enter in.

A fift: Conſider, I pray, in all your perplexities, the wonderful moderation of Chriſts commands; that he hath taken away the rigor of the law, and requires no more of us, then he enables us to perform: He expects not, from us, the performance of all things, in that manner, as they may be done by our utmoſt poſſible diligence and care, but accepts them at his throne of grace, if they be performed by our utmoſt moral diligence, and care: according to the ordinary courſe of humane diligence in other matters: therfore we ought not to be diſquieted, that we do not our utmoſt *poſſible* diligence, to obſerve his commands, for by ſuch ſcruples we ſhal be ſlacked and hindred in doing our utmoſt *moral* diligence.

A ſixt: To truſt in Gods mercies through Chriſt, that he wil give grace to enable us to what he requires, and pardon what is amiſs; He knows wherof we are made, how frail and weak we are, and wil have compaſſion of our infirmities.

Seventhly: to be truly ſenſible of our own natural corruption, that of our ſelves we are not able to think a good thought,

it

it must be the grace of God which enables us; and by that grace we are not enabled (in this our frail condition) to that exact performance which the rigor of the law requires; only to that sincere and upright obedience, which God (through Christ) wil be pleased to accept. And though I hope no scruples arise in you, presuming of your natural strength, yet some may arise, not weighing the imperfection of our mortal condition, even in our regenerate state: And if so, it wil be a good means towards the cure, that you learn to discern between your personal weaknesses, and those of our mortal condition, (which are common to all while they are in the flesh) and charge your self as culpable, and sinful, only in those *particular* defects, not in these *general* ones: It is an unhappiness (not to be thought on without grief of heart) that we cannot now live (as in Paradise) exactly performing the wil of God always, in all things, with all our faculties; but I hope (if it be lamented) it wil not amount to a sin at Christs throne of grace.

An eighth: rightly to understand that general rule of the Casuists, *In dubiis tutior pars eligenda*, in doubtful matters to chuse

chuſe the ſafeſt ſide; firſt, it muſt be in doubtful matters, where there is truly a doubt, not in ſcrupulous matters: Secondly, we are not alway bound to chuſe the ſafeſt, provided that what we chuſe, is ſafe: which is the ſafeſt wil be hard to reſolve in ſome caſes, and if you ſtay for that reſolution, ſcruples wil flow in. You do not ſin, if you chuſe that which is ſafe; and that is ſafe which (as I ſaid before) is grounded upon faith, knowledg, or opinion, ſo you be not deceived in them.

A ninth may be, by qualifying that ſtrict opinion, that we are alway bound to do that which is beſt; it is moſt true we are to aim at the faireſt, and beſt; and to preſs towards it; but if then we miſs it, and come ſhort of it, we ſin not; if that which you do be good, though it might have been better, lament the imperfection you ſhould, and yet praiſe God for the goodneſs of it.

A tenth may be, by conſidering that affirmative preceps lay not ſo ſtrict an obligation upon us, as negative precepts do: theſe *obligant ad ſemper*, (as Caſuiſts ſpeak) they not: for negative precepts are not broken, but by committing ſome act; affirmative by omitting only; and our obligation

ligation is not so strict against omitting, as it is against committing. A case may happen wherin it may be lawful to omit the affirmative (as keeping the holy Festivals, and Fasts of the Church, *for God will have mercy, and not sacrifice*) though no case can possibly happen, wherin I may lawfully commit that which is against the negative; I cannot be excused if I take Gods name in vain, by Oaths and Covenants, though mercifulness towards my self, wife, and children, (in saving my estate therby) plead for me: and so for other Negative precepts: therfore if the checks you hear within your self be concerning Affirmatives, they may be the more suspected for scruples, and sooner answered, then if they be concerning Negatives.

Lastly, seeing these scruples come to you with such good words, and such holy pretences, the best way to defeat them of their mischievous purposes is, to take them at those their good words, and go no further with them; Let those words of theirs stir you up to a more universal and a more exact care, in the service of God; thus you may make even these deceitful Gibeonites serviceable to the use of Gods Tabernacle. Thus,

Thus, becauſe the danger from theſe ſcruples may be great, therfore the directions to ſuppreſs and prevent, or to defeat them are many; and yet more you may ſuggeſt to your ſelf, or read in books of Devotion, and Caſuiſts: By ſome of theſe, or ſuch like, you may (I doubt not) obtain eaſe from your perplexities; and peace and comfort in your holy and juſt performances. And (as in the diſeaſes of your body, ſo in this of your ſoul) the ſooner you go about the cure, the better; it is eaſieſt at firſt; the more theſe ſcruples gain upon you, the more unſatisfiable they are, and there wil be the greater difficulty to caſt them out.

And here I muſt add a caution or two. Firſt, that you take very great heed, that you eject not the motions of the bleſſed Spirit, as if they were ſcruples; that you learn to diſtinguiſh between Thoſe, and Theſe: and whenſoever thoſe knock at the dore of your heart, open to them; whenſoever they call, or whiſper to you, ſay, *Speak Lord, for thy ſervant heareth.*

Secondly, that you beware of the common error of the world, which is, to account all ſtrict rules of Juſtice, or Temperance,

rance, Obedience to Parents; yea, and the punctual, preciſe ſervice of God, (though they be moſt abſolutely neceſſary) ſcruples and niceties: and deride the practiſers of ſuch rules, as ſcrupulous perſons.

And now at laſt in the cloſe of your Letter, you ſeem to grutch all time, which is not ſpent by you in holy duties and Praier, and you think fit to advance in them, as in other graces and virtues: Love, I ſee, is liberal, and where you love much, you wil ſtil be giving more.

And the more you encreaſe in love, the leſs wil that ſeem to be which you beſtow; that which is much now, wil ſeem leſs hereafter: And if you think fit your holy duties of Praier and Meditation ſhould advance ſtil, in proportion to your love; Remember withall that of *Jacob* (the mighty man of Praier) to drive no faſter, then the children and cattel (your weak body, *Jumentum animæ*, as the Fathers call it) are able to endure.

Now my Praier ſhal be, That all theſe ſhakings by doubts and ſcruples may tend to root you more deep, and more firm

in

in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whose grace and mercy I commend you, and rest

Your servant in Christ Jesus.

FINIS.

A LETTER

CONTEINING

Many remarkable paſſages

In the moſt holy

LIFE & DEATH

OF THE LATE LADY,

LETICE,

Vi-Counteſs FALKLAND.

WRITTEN

To the Lady *Moriſon* at great *Tew* in Oxford-ſhire.

LONDON,
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(2)

A LETTER,

Conteining many remarkable paſſages in the moſt holy Life *and* Death *of the late* Lady LETICE *Vi-Counteſs* Falkland.

Madame,

IT is the deſire of ſome *Honorable Perſonages* to have an exact account of the *Death* of your moſt dear *Daughter*, the *Lady* FALKLAND; *they* being privy to much piety in *her life*, expect (as wel they may) ſomwhat moſt *remarkable* in *her ſickneſs* and *death*.

And for the *comfort* of *you*, and for the *ſatisfaction* of *them*, I have gathered together ſome ſcattered particulars of *her life*, *ſickneſs*, and *death*, and have ſent them unto *you*.

That the moſt *precious perfume* of *her name*,

name, being *powred out (like S.*Mary Magdalens *box of Spiknard*) *may fil your*, and *their houſes.*

And though this *relation* of ſo many eminent *virtues* in *her*, would not (perhaps) have appeared ſo handſome from *your* own *pen* (becauſe ſo deep a ſhare of the praiſe belongs to *you*) yet you need not bluſh at the delivering of *it*; it may conſiſt with *your modeſty*, to be a *witneſs* of the truth of theſe particulars; though not to be a *publiſher* of them.

And if the *memory* of that moſt holy *Lady*, continue *precious* amongſt us; and *her* holy *example* efficacious with us; and *God* (who *ſanctified her* here, and now *glorifies her* in heaven) be magnified and honored for his *mercies* and *graces*, I have all I aim at.

I ſhal note ſomwhat remarkable in the very beginning of *her Chriſtian race*; more, in *her progreſs*, and *proficiency* in *it*; and then come to the laſt *ſtages*, when the *crown*, at the *end* of the *race*, was (as it were) within *her* ſight and view.

This *elect Lady* ſet out early in the ways of God, in the dawn or morning of her age: There was care taken while ſhe was young, that ſhe ſhould be brought up in the

the nurture and admonition of the Lord; She came not from her Nurſes arms without ſome knowledg of the principles of Chriſtian religion.

While ſhe was very young, her obedience to her Parents (which ſhe extended alſo to her Aunt, who had ſome charge over her, in her Fathers houſe) was very exact, and as ſhe began, ſo ſhe continued in this gratious, and awful temper of duty, and obſervance: I have heard you ſay (Madame) that you cannot remember any one particular, wherin at any time, ſhe diſobeyed her Father, or you.

That her time might not be miſ-ſpent, nor her employments tedious to her, the ſeveral howrs of the day had variety of employments aſſigned to them; and the intermixing of praier, reading, writing, working, and walking, brought a pleaſure to each of them, in their courſes; ſo that the day was carried about faſter then ſhe would, and ſhe begins in this her youth, to abridg her ſelf of her ſleep, and was oft-times at a book in her Cloſet, when ſhe was thought to be in bed.

You remember wel, I preſume, the Purſe her young fingers wrought for her own alms, and how importunately ſhe

would beg your ſingle mony to fil it; and as greedy ſhe was of employing it too; the poor ſeldome went from the houſe without the alms of the young daughter, as wel as of the Parents.

And how conſtant ſhe was then at her private Praiers, I gheſſe, by what I have heard from the keeper of your houſe; when ſtrangers were in her own room where ſhe ordinarily had her retirements, He was called to give her the key of ſome other chamber for that purpoſe, at her hour of Praier; ſhe would procure a new Oratory, rather then omit, or defer that duty.

And how powerful with God, the lifting up of her pure hands every where, in this her innocent Childhood was, ſoon appeared. For while her piety and holineſs was in this bud, a violent attempt there was made to blaſt it. About the thirteenth year of her age, there was a ſtorm of temptation raiſed in her, and ſome arguments the tempter had ſuggeſted to drive her to deſpair of Gods mercy towards her: And this I note the rather, becauſe it is not ordinary at ſuch years, to have attained to that growth, as to be thought fit for thoſe encounters:

But

But God upheld this young twig, againſt ſuch a ſtorm, which hath torn up many a fair tree: For after ſome anguiſh of ſpirit, and patience in the combate, and earneſt praiers, Gods grace was ſufficient for her: and ſurely it was not the *ſtrength* of her hands, at this age, but the *pureneſs* of them, which prevailed for her.

Some there are, whom God leads from the ſpiritual *Ægypt*, to *Canaan*; not by this way of the Philiſtims, leſt they ſhould repent when they ſee war, and turn back again into *Ægypt*, *Exod.* 13. 17. But her (it ſeems) God trained up in this military courſe; and from her youth exerciſed her in it, that ſhe might be expert at it.

After this conqueſt, her ſoul enjoyed much peace and tranquillity, and ſhe went on moſt cheerfully in holy duties, and taſted much comfort, and delight in them: And her heart was ever and anon ſo ful, that out of the abundance of it, ſhe would ſay, *Oh what an incomparable ſweetneſs there is in the muſick upon* Davids *Harp*; *oh, what heavenly joy there is in thoſe Pſalms, and in praiers, and praiſes to God*; *how amiable are the courts of Gods houſe*; *how welcome the days of his ſolemn worſhip!*

And now nothing can hinder her from

thoſe holy Aſſemblies; Every *Lords day* conſtantly, forenoon, and afternoon, ſhe would be with the earlieſt at them: Some while (when ſhe wanted a convenience of riding) ſhe walked cheerfully three or fowr miles a day, as young, and as weak, as ſhe was, to them: And at night ſhe accounted the joys, and the refreſhments, which her ſoul had been partaker of, a ſufficient recompence, for the extream wearineſs of her body.

And within a ſhort while, by reading good Authors, and by frequent converſe with learned men, ſhe improves (by Gods help) her natural talents of underſtanding, and reaſon, to a great degree of wiſdom and knowledg.

And now theſe riches, of her piety, wiſdom, quickneſs of wit, diſcretion, judgment, ſobriety, and gravity of behavior, being once perceived by Sir *Lucius Cary*, ſeemed portion enough to him: Theſe were they, he priſed above worldly Inheritances, and thoſe other fading acceſſions, which moſt men court.

And being married to him, riches and honor, and all other worldly proſperity, flow in upon her; and conſequently to proceed in holineſs and godlineſs grows

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an harder task, then before it ſeemed to be: it being much more difficult *when riches* and *honor* thus *increaſe*, then, *not* to *ſet her heart upon them.*

Yet God enabled her by his grace for this alſo; for when poſſeſſion was given her of ſtately palaces, pleaſantly ſeated, and moſt curiouſly and fully furniſhed, and of revenues and royalties anſwerable, though your Ladyſhip hath heard her acknowledg Gods great goodneſs towards her, for theſe temporal preferments, yet neither you, nor any of her friends, could perceive her heart, any whit exalted, with joy for them.

They were of the Babylonians retinew, who when they had ſeen *Hezekiahs* riches and treaſures, ſet their heart upon them, *Iſai.* 39. this true Iſraelite reſerved her affections, for thoſe riches which never fade, and for thoſe dwellings, which are above, where the City is of pure gold, and the walls garniſhed with pretious ſtones.

This confluence of all worldly felicities and contentments, did ſo litle affect her, that there were ſome ſeemed diſpleaſed at it; & then ſhe would attribute much of it, to a melancholick diſeaſe, which was

then upon her; And though I deny not, but that ſome worldly delights might fall by the hand of her melancholy, yet doubtleſs where the diſeaſe ſlew its hundreds, grace ſlew its ten thouſands.

And in this condition ſome years paſſed, during which time, ſhe was moſt conſtant at Praiers, and Sermons, and frequently received the bleſſed Sacrament; and although now, and then, ſhe felt not her wonted ſpiritual comforts, but in ſtead of them had ſome anguiſh, and bitternes of ſpirit, yet by the advice of good Divines, and by her ordinary help of praier, ſhe recovered ſoon her peace and joy.

Thus in ſeveral conditions, of youth, and ripe years, of virginity, and marriage; and amongſt contrary temptations, of adverſity, and proſperity; affliction, and comfort, ſhe continues that courſe of holy life, which ſhe had begun; a great proficiency, and a far progreſs this: yet I crave leave to reckon it all into her beginning, for this was but ſlow in reſpect of that great agility, and quick ſpeed, ſhe attained unto, in the other part of her ſpiritual race.

Her proficiency and progreſs I ſhal account

count from that time, when her proſperity began to abate; when her dear Lord, and moſt beloved Husband, that he might be like *Zebulon*, (a ſtudent helping the Lord againſt the mighty, *Judg.* 5. 14.) went from his Library to the Camp; from his Book and Pen, to his Sword and Spear; and the conſequent of that, an inevitable neceſſity, that ſhe muſt now be divorced from him, for a while, whom ſhe loved more then all the things of this world; this was a ſad beginning: but that total divorce, which, ſoon after, death made between him, and her; that he ſhould be taken away, by an untimely death, and by a violent death too, this, this was a moſt ſore affliction to her; the ſame ſword which killed him pierced her heart alſo.

And this heavy affliction which God ſent upon her, ſhe interpreted for a loud call from heaven, to a further proficiency in piety and virtue.

And yet ſhe fears it may be a puniſhment alſo upon her, for ſome ſin, or other, and therfore ſtrictly examines her ſelf, and ranſacks every corner of her heart, to find out wherin ſhe had provoked God to lay this great affliction on her; and to make ſure, ſhe renues her repentance for

all her tranſgreſſions; and her godly ſorrow for her ſins paſt, is as freſh, as if it had bin for the ſins of yeſterday.

And now ſhe addreſſes her ſelf to a Divine of great eminency for piety, and learning; and from him ſhe takes directions for a more ſtrict courſe of life in this her Widowhood, then formerly; now ſhe forgetting quite what was behind, preſſes forward to what was before, and, as if ſhe had done nothing yet, ſhe begins anew.

And though the greateſt and chiefeſt part of her Chriſtian work, was locked up cloſe within her ſelf, and ſome of it very ſtudiouſly, and induſtriouſly concealed by her, (that ſhe might be ſure no degree of vain glory, ſhould creep upon her with it) yet much of it appeared, by the effects, and is now forced to come abroad before us.

Her firſt and grand employment was to read and underſtand, and then (to the utmoſt of her ſtrength) to practiſe our moſt bleſſed Saviors Sermon upon the Mount, in the fift, ſixt, and ſeventh Chapters of S. *Matthew's* Goſpel; and having read over a moſt compleat (though compendious Comment) upon that Sermon,

ſhe

ſhe ſet forthwith, upon the work of practiſing it, and began with thoſe virtues, to which the beatitudes are annexed.

And her mercifulnes was none of thoſe virtues, which ſhe could at all conceal from us; much of her eſtate (we ſaw) given yearly to thoſe of her Kindred, which were capable of it, from her: And ſome of her neer neighbours, who were very old, and not able to work; or very young, and not fit for work, were wholy manteined by her: To other poor children ſhe contributed much, both for their ſpiritual, and their temporal wel-being; by erecting a Schole for them, where they were to be taught both to read, and to work: much care ſhe took, that no man, or woman, or child ſhould want employment; that their own hands might bring them in a competent ſubſiſtence; and accounted that the beſt contrivement of her eſtate, which ſet moſt poor people on work; for if it were to their profit, ſhe litle regarded her own detriment in it.

So that her principal care herein, was to keep them from Idleneſs (*that root of all ſin and wickedneſs*) for by another contrivement of her eſtate, ſhe might have received more profit. and therby have